



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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99-166

Executive Council receives warm welcome to flood-ravaged Honduras

by James Solheim

(ENS) In a rare meeting outside of the United States, the church's Executive Council met in Honduras—and was embraced in a special way by the people and the problems of a vibrant and growing diocese.

It began when many council members joined the work crews building the first 35 houses out of 95 planned at a new village outside of San Pedro Sula, a commercial hub where the diocesan headquarters and cathedral are located. A year after the devastation of Hurricane Mitch, the houses and a clinic were blessed by council members and ground was broken for a chapel.

"To come back here less than a year after the hurricane and see what has been possible is nothing less than a miracle," said Phoebe Griswold, who has traveled in the area with a team from the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. The "Faith, Hope and Joy" project is the first directly sponsored by the fund. (A meeting of the fund's board after the council meeting approved the purchase of additional land, adjacent to the village, enough for another 100 homes).

The bare patch of land she first visited last year now supports several housing projects, including one nearby that is sponsored by Habitat for Humanity and the South American Missionary Society. She expressed particular excitement with the new clinic, named for her husband, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold.

"But we are building community, not just houses," she said, pointing out that a soccer field and garden are also part of the plans. And there will be a clean, safe water supply, thanks to a water purification system designed by an Episcopalian from South Carolina who is an environmental scientist.

Excitement infuses meeting

When the council officially convened October 28 it was quickly apparent that the work experience would impact on the whole meeting. The presiding bishop called it "an opportunity to taste the reality of Christ's body in some concrete ways, to experience Christ in the here and now."

Council members agreed that working together on the project had been a unifying force for the council itself, giving its decision-making a mission context. Some expressed an eagerness to return in another year to see how the village develops when it is filled with families--and the laughter of children.

"The poor of Honduras angrily ask why God abandoned them—but you have helped us answer the question," said Bishop Leo Frade in welcoming the council. He described a diocese that combines evangelism with social action, a diocese that is growing with about 20,000 members in 67 parishes and 15 missions, served by 45 priests and deacons.

Later in the meeting Frade would strongly endorse a resolution calling on the U.S. government to halt its policy that deports Hondurans who lack legal immigration status. The policy threatens the economic recovery of Honduras after the hurricane. "It is difficult for an ant to walk beside an elephant," Frade said in pointing out that the policy towards Salvadorans and Nicaraguans is different. Despite its support for American policies in the

region during the Reagan years, "We were your friends and we were left hanging. We are the only country that doesn't get protection. We are asking for the same treatment," he said.

Eucharist as festival

For many council members, the highlight of the encounter with the people of Honduras came at a festival Eucharist—or a Eucharist that was a festival.

Over a thousand people jammed the Catedral El Buen Pastor and an adjacent courtyard with television monitors to catch the exuberant service. Many had traveled through the night to be present. "I know now what it is like to be in the center of a cloud of witnesses," said Bishop Christopher Epting of Iowa, who helped distribute communion. Judge Jim Bradberry of Virginia called it "the richest liturgical experience" he ever had.

The recently refurbished cathedral was flooded with light as the procession of bishops and clergy and guests was greeted with lively music. Youth in native costume brought forward the gifts of the earth during the offertory and placed them in front of the altar. The sanctuary was quickly filled with incense. The presiding bishop celebrated and preached in Spanish, receiving murmurs of surprise and appreciation.

After the service the participants were inundated with confetti and glitters as they moved out of the cathedral and boarded buses for a visit to the diocesan-sponsored home for abandoned, orphaned and abused girls. Our Little Roses was founded by Diana Frade, council member and wife of the bishop of Honduras. Following lunch a choir from the home sang a special song they had written for the presiding bishop.

Chinnis hopes for hospitable conversation

In her opening comments to the council, Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies, expressed her own appreciation for the opportunity to "experience the culture, language and warmth of the people of Honduras."

With next summer's General Convention clearly on her mind, she expressed encouragement with recent efforts at "hospitable" or "graceful" conversation when dealing with potentially divisive issues. It is hard work, she warned, "to remain open to the spiritual gifts offered by people with whom we have deep disagreements about important things."

At a meeting of Province IV, for example, participants began first by "discussing matters which unite the church—the baptismal covenant, worship, youth work; and then by addressing some dividing issues such as authority and sexuality." That approach establishes "common ground and the commitments we share before talking about our differences," she said.

As General Convention approaches "the siren calls to preserve right-thinking by rejecting each other are becoming louder. We, as leaders of the church, must do our utmost to raise the hospitable option again and again, to model openness and welcome for 'the other,' whatever our perspective or vested interest," she said.

Opening the budget process

With persistent prodding by the church's treasurer, Steve Duggan, the council continued its efforts to design a more flexible budget process, one that can respond to emerging challenges. He expressed frustration with the resolutions passed at the Philadelphia General Convention that had financial implications with no way to respond. "Can we build a budget process that is flexible and accountable, one that expresses a dynamic church?" he asked.

Griswold asked a similar question in his opening remarks: "How is the budget a manifestation of the Gospel for the purpose of mission? How could we structure the budget so that it is possible to respond creatively to new opportunities?"

Council members received a draft of the proposed budget for the next triennium which it will review at its January meeting.

Several council members expressed concern over the role of the national youth office in a planned meeting of youth in Boulder, Colorado, at the same time as the General Convention. Tom Chu, director of ministries with young people, said that the triennial Episcopal Youth Event is based on diocesan delegations and put together with a set of criteria to guarantee balanced participation. The Boulder event is a different kind of meeting, with an open welcome, he said.

What bothered some council members was the apparent claim that the Boulder meeting was sponsored by the national church when, in fact, it is sponsored by the Diocese of Colorado and the American Anglican Council, an umbrella organization of conservatives. Chu said that his office had provided some encouragement but was not a co-sponsor of the Boulder meeting, as some had claimed. A letter from Sonia Francis, assistant to the presiding bishop for program, made it clear that the national staff was providing only technical support based on experience with EYE.

In other action the Executive Council:

Approved the formation of the Episcopal Partnership for Mission pulling together a wide range of organizations, agencies and networks that send missionaries;

Discussed proposed funding for provincial networks to encourage networking possibilities. Some felt that the funding should come from the province, not the national church;

Endorsed a resolution for General Convention that will ask parishes and dioceses to provide "a safe, hospitable environment for frank conversation with youth and young adults about sexuality...." It asks national and provincial youth networks to suggest guidelines and resources.

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-167

Congress passes debt relief measure to aid poor countries

(ENS) Against long political odds, Episcopal, Catholic and Protestant churches in the U.S. came together and successfully pushed a legislative package through Congress to provide debt relief for poor countries. "We haven't seen this sort of push from the churches since the anti-Apartheid movement," said Thomas H. Hart, director of government relations for the Episcopal Church.

Late on the night of November 15, congressional and White House negotiators overcame lingering disagreements on how to let the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cancel some of its loans to poor countries. The deal finalized one of the few remaining issues in federal budget negotiations, paving the way for Congress to adjourn.

The agreement allows the IMF to revalue part of its gold, releasing a profit of more than \$2 billion to fund debt relief for the world's poorest nations. The IMF is permitted to use

most of that profit now, but will need further Congressional authorization next spring to use the rest. In return, the IMF agreed to make information about its dealings more open and available to Congress.

The revaluation required Congressional approval because the gold is owned by the U.S. and other members of the IMF.

"The odds were against us," Hart said. "We faced budget constraints, public cynicism, congressional resistance to foreign assistance, a complex international financial subject—not to mention that, on its surface, canceling debts is a tough sell." All of these challenges were present amid the common perception that the mainline churches have been in decline, both in membership and influence. "This is an important demonstration of what we can do," Hart continued.

Supporters of debt relief on Capitol Hill particularly noted the work of the Episcopal Church. "The Episcopal Church was a key organization in this effort, effectively translating the Biblical vision of Jubilee into workable public policy and achieving real results on behalf of poor people around the world," said U.S. Rep. Jim Leach, a Republican from Iowa and lead sponsor of debt relief legislation. "As an Episcopalian, I am particularly grateful for our church's leadership in securing congressional approval for debt relief."

Sen. Joseph Biden, ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a cosponsor of debt relief legislation, concurred. "I applaud the efforts of the Episcopal Church and the many organizations who came together to raise and move this issue before the Congress and Administration, particularly in a very difficult political environment," Biden said the morning following passage of the bill.

"Of course, there is still work to be done," Hart explained. "Congress hasn't yet made a U.S. contribution to write down some multilateral debts held by regional development banks." But, the current deal includes money to write off the debts owed directly to the U.S., approval for the IMF to use gold and some contingency accounts for debt relief, and a mandate to direct the relief to the poor in an transparent and accountable way. "Getting three out of four isn't bad," Hart concluded.

Most analysts predict this package will be enough to set in motion an international agreement among the Group of Seven—the largest industrialized countries—and other creditor nations to leverage nearly \$90 billion in debt relief to the world's poorest countries. The U.S. holds only 3 percent of all poor country debt.

The Episcopal Church worked closely with the U.S. Catholic Conference, Oxfam America, Bread for the World, and Church World Service to move this initiative on Capitol Hill.

99-168

Presiding bishop's pastoral visit to Colombia finds nation and church under threat

by James Solheim

(ENS) The bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Colombia finds it very difficult to even speak of the future of his country without fighting back the tears.

Bishop Bernardo Merino, who has been bishop since 1979, has watched for decades as civil strife has shredded the fabric of his nation. It is difficult to live under the constant threat of violence, he tells his visitors from the United States.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold found his pastoral visit to South America, where he met with the bishops of the area, a very sobering experience. "These are small dioceses, working under very difficult political conditions—and yet they are a part of us, part of our reality as a church. They extend our horizons, giving us a richer sense of what it means to be the body of Christ in difficult circumstances."

During conversations with the bishops of Colombia, Venezuela, and the two dioceses in Ecuador they talked of their common concerns: education for their clergy, the isolation and need for collegiality, and the endless search for peace in the area. "It was important that they come together to share their burdens with me and with each other because they felt strengthened by their time together," Griswold said. "And it is an important part of my role."

Years of violence

The first thing one notices on the streets of Bogota is the number of kids with guns. Police are everywhere in this teeming city of six million, a city plagued with random violence, drug trafficking and kidnapping that have been a part of life for at least three decades. A new government, which seems to have more credibility, has opened negotiations with the country's principal Marxist guerrilla group but, after so many false starts, most people have adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

The frustrated people of Colombia have launched a series of protest marches in 700 cities and towns across the nation, demanding respect for human rights and an end to the cycle of violence that has claimed 35,000 lives in the last decade and sent another 1.5 million people into internal displacement. Relief agencies describe their plight as the most serious human emergency in the Western Hemisphere, claiming that in numerical terms it is worse than East Timor, Chechnya or even Kosovo, although it has attracted little international attention in comparison.

The situation is complicated even more by the country's worst recession in 70 years, making any attempt to help the displaced, especially those affected by last January's earthquake, a point of resentment, according to reports.

The demonstrations, which have drawn millions of the country's 40 million people, have been organized by a civic group called "No Mas," or "No More." The presiding bishop's party, which included his wife Phoebe and the Rev. Ricardo Potter, saw billboards in Bogota with the slogan "No mas. Vamos por la paz," urging people to work for peace. And the small green ribbons symbolizing the movement were sprouting like tender shoots of hope on the streets of Bogota.

Diplomats express little hope

During conversations at the American embassy, described as the "most secure in the world," built of steel-reinforced granite, the group was told that the guerrilla war was being waged in the most barbaric fashion, showing a complete lack of respect for human rights.

The government must press forward with the peace process because there isn't much of an alternative, the party was told. Embassy officials said that the No Mas Movement, which began as an anti-kidnapping movement, has stirred enough popular support to counter a deep sense of apathy.

Embassy officials said that the church, the most pervasive institution in Colombian society, is under a great deal of pressure and is often a victim itself, although they saw the churches as potential partners in the search for peace. The guerrillas have been particularly hard on evangelical parishes in rural areas, they said.

In the short term, the embassy conversation revealed a sense of pessimism, even in the fight against the drug trade which has been heavily subsidized by the United States. One diplomat, an Episcopalian, said that casual cocaine use in the United States contributes to a

horrible situation in Colombia, including the massacre of rural farmers. Yet Colombia was a violent country well before the drug problem emerged, he said.

The Americans said that whatever ideological vision the guerillas might have had in the beginning has disappeared and they are nothing more than thugs and warlords today. As a sign of despair, a poll revealed that 60 percent favored a direct military intervention by the Americans.

Merino said that, as a man of faith, he clings to hope. "Trust in God. Trust in Colombia and its people," he says wistfully.

The British ambassador, Jeremy Thorp, was not much more encouraging in his assessment, but he said that non-government organizations were numerous, active and quite powerful. "The situation is better but has a long ways to go," he said.

He agreed that, after 40 years, the guerillas are not very popular and that they had no political agenda or clear political goals. Yet they are thriving because of the drug trade and may be in no hurry to negotiate. "The church is the one institution in the country that is generally respected," he said. Because they have a vision of peace, they could play a crucial mediating role in society.

Potter said later that there is a deep need for reconciliation throughout Colombian society. "It isn't simply a matter of stopping the killing—society needs a conversation on reconciliation."

A history of violence

During conversations with church leaders in the diocese, it is obvious that most trace the history of violence back to a 1948 civil war known as La Violencia between the Liberal and Conservative parties that left 200,000 dead and shattered the political balance. "We have never been the same because there is just no common commitment to a political process," said one priest. Others described escalating poverty, fed by violence and natural disasters.

In a meeting with the presiding bishop, clergy of the diocese described their ministries. Most of them hold secular jobs, as lawyers, teachers, a pilot, accountant and soldier. Despite the hardships, most expressed deep satisfaction in making a difference in their ministry.

A lawyer-priest expressed a conviction that Anglicans have a gift to offer—the need for tolerance and a message of peace, a commitment to pluralism. Our contribution, he said, is to build a sense of community. He added that Anglicans seemed to be the only ones working to improve the status of women in society.

Several priests mentioned the ecumenical cooperation they enjoyed in an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country.

The presiding bishop met with several Roman Catholic bishops who apparently knew of his commitment to dialogue in his role as co-chair of the international Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue. Merino, a former Roman Catholic priest, joined Griswold in discussing how some of the practical issues are dealt with on the local level, vowing not to let anything stand in the way of that relationship.

Griswold described his hopes that the search for unity would take root at the local level. "It's all about incarnation," he said. "If we can live the baptismal mystery it will help dialogue take root." The bishops nodded, agreeing that the foundation of unity is present in baptism. They invited the presiding bishop to draw up a memorandum of his hopes and dreams that they could share with bishops in the Latin American Conference.

The gathered community

During a Eucharist on November 3, Merino welcomed the presiding bishop and the other South American bishops to "this beleaguered country, living the worst part of its

history. It has not been easy to be a bishop here," he added. He welcomed Griswold who, in addition to presiding and preaching, dedicated a banner for the cathedral incorporating the green ribbon of the No Mas Movement.

In a later conversation, Phoebe Griswold said that she had been deeply moved by the visit to Colombia, especially hearing the stories of the young priests ministering under dangerous conditions. She expressed special concern and sadness over the apparent isolation, however. "We must find a companion relationship for the Diocese of Colombia, someone who understands the ministry of reconciliation, people who appreciate the situation of this church in such a troubled nation," she said.

Finding a direct tie to other dioceses of the Episcopal Church "would help us to understand the immense variety of our church," she added. "We can't isolate them because we are afraid of the political situation."

"Such a relationship could expand our own horizons, giving us a richer sense of what it means to be the body of Christ in difficult circumstances," said the presiding bishop.

-James Solheim is the director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-169

NCC's 50th anniversary celebrates the past, restructures for the future

by James Solheim

(ENS) The National Council of Churches (NCC) of Christ in the USA celebrated its 50th anniversary by reflecting on its role in the ecumenical movement, embracing new leadership, and adopting a sweeping restructure to take it into a new millennium.

In a sprawling four-day meeting marked by forums on a wide range of issues, worship services, reunions, caucuses and even a special concert by the Cleveland Orchestra, the future of the organization was on the minds of everyone.

Meeting in the same auditorium in Cleveland where it was formed nearly 50 years ago, delegates to the NCC General Assembly gathered under a cloud of uncertainty, facing some predictions that a looming financial crisis threatened its future. That pessimism was balanced, however, with a genuine excitement over the election of Ambassador Andrew Young as president and former Congressman Robert Edgar as general secretary, two preacher-politicians with enough organizational ability to make the changes necessary.

Young began his career by serving in the NCC youth office, right out of college, before moving to Atlanta to work with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He was elected to Congress in 1972, serving three terms until he was appointed by his friend Jimmy Carter as the U.S. representative at the United Nations in 1977. He later served two terms as mayor of Atlanta and co-chair of the 1996 Olympics.

He credits his tenure with the NCC's Youth Division in the 1950s with "laying a wonderful foundation for me. It not only prepared me for the civil rights movement but my involvement in Congress and the United Nations essentially came from my experience in ecumenical Christianity." After his graduation from Hartford Seminary in 1955, Young was

ordained in the United Church of Christ and served a parish in Georgia before joining the NCC staff in 1957.

Edgar was elected to Congress in 1974, the first Democrat in a heavily Republican district in Pennsylvania in 120 years, serving five terms before voluntarily stepping down in 1987 because of his belief in term limits. An ordained Methodist minister, he served parishes in Pennsylvania and as chaplain at Drexel University in Philadelphia. For the last 12 years he has been president of Claremont School of Theology in California, an institution that was "just a hiccup away from going out of business. I led in changing the spirit and image of the school around, and now people see it as a model of how to salvage institutions in financial distress," he said. He was credited with rejuvenating the school and taking the endowment from less than \$4 million to more than \$22 million.

Radical restructure

Edgar and Young inherit an organization that has enjoyed some glorious moments in the past, championing social causes, especially during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and produced two translations of the Bible that have sold over 70 million copies.

For a variety of reasons, however, support for the council has dwindled. The Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, who is finishing nine years as general secretary, attributed the decline to some changes in the ecumenical movement itself, with more attention and support going to local causes and ecumenical cooperation.

The Rev. Canon Patrick Mauney, director of Anglican and Global Relations for the Episcopal Church, served as a member of the Transition Management Team that was charged "to develop budget, structural design and staff configurations for a sustainable and viable council."

Meeting behind closed doors, the NCC Governing Board shaped the proposals that went to the General Assembly. Bishop Craig Anderson of the Episcopal Church, who is finishing his term as NCC president, said that the restructuring was like "trying to ride a bicycle while we're still trying to build it." Someone else described the NCC as a camel with 35 humps, each representing one of its members.

While many of the details must be worked out, it is clear that the New York-based staff will be cut by at least a third, or 34 positions, including three associate general secretaries and four high-level directors. Anderson made an "impassioned plea to be together and work for what we are about—the unity of the body of Christ—and not be pulled apart and fragmented, which is sin."

In an effort to work within what was called a "fiscal framework," the NCC Executive Board must deal with a shortfall in 1999 of nearly \$4 million. An emergency appeal to members to make a one-time "gift" to cover the immediate shortfall met with some resistance because of the murky financial picture—and the \$750,000 cost of the anniversary celebration itself. The board appointed Stated Clerk Clifton Kirkpatrick of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Richard Hamm of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to solicit funds.

Koreans tell chilling story

Just before the meeting the NCC got involved in a story that illustrates its ability to put items on the human rights agenda. Responding to a request from the National Council of Churches in Korea, the NCC asked the Pentagon last December to look into detailed testimony from survivors of a massacre of 400 civilians 50 years ago by U.S. soldiers at No Gun Ri. The account was dismissed by both the U.S. and Korean governments. Then some veterans, in an Associated Press story September 29, admitted that they had participated in the massacre.

Four massacre survivors and three veterans came to Cleveland for an emotional service of recognition and remembrance, lighting candles to illuminate “the deepest corners of our hurt and our fear and our guilt.” After the meeting, the group traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials who promised to look into the charges.

Campbell said that the service and meeting is “exactly the kind of ‘truth and reconciliation’ work the church should be and is doing all over the world.” She praised the survivors for their persistence in pursuing justice and the veterans for their courage in coming forward.

A church leader who knows a great deal about truth and reconciliation, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, paid tribute to the NCC in a letter. He was prevented from attending because of a prostate operation. He commended the NCC for “the fervor of your love and caring... most notably during apartheid.” He said that the NCC had been “steadfast” and “incredibly generous—you were there for us. God is proud of you.”

General Secretary Konrad Raiser of the World Council of Churches, Canon Clement Janda of the All Africa Council of Churches, and the Rev. Riad Jarjour of the Middle East Council of Churches all brought greetings, pointing out the importance of the NCC on the world stage.

Young installed as president

In a sweeping service filled with powerful preaching and music, Young was installed November 11 as the 20th president of the NCC. The Rev. Otis Moss, Jr. hailed him as a voice for peace and justice. “We have a voice, a vision and a victory,” he said. In a surprise appearance by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Young was called “one of the authentic links to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” He said that Young “is part of the glue that holds the world together.”

At a news conference later Young did not seem disturbed by the NCC’s financial crisis, suggesting that it has always been in financial trouble. He suggested that his experience of helping to restructure city government in Atlanta will help in the NCC restructure.

“I get to stand in the way of the Holy Spirit,” he said. “Organizing 35 communions and the people in them to take seriously the covenants in the Old and New Testaments is a challenge I’m ready to take.”

--James Solheim is director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-170

482 years after Luther's protest, Lutherans and Catholics reach agreement

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) On October 31, 482 years to the day after Martin Luther nailed on a church door his list of 95 theses, thus launching the Lutheran Reformation, Lutherans and Roman Catholics solemnly declared that mutual condemnations from the Reformation era no longer apply.

Before a congregation of 750 church leaders and journalists that filled St. Anna's Lutheran Church in Augsburg, Germany, Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Lutheran Bishop Christian Krause, president of the Lutheran World Federation, signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

According to the document, there is now "a consensus in basic truths" between Lutherans and Catholics on the doctrine of justification—one of the most contentious issues that divided Luther and his followers from the papacy. As a result the "mutual doctrinal condemnations do not apply to the teaching of the dialogue partners as presented in the joint declaration."

Spontaneous applause broke out in the church as Dr. Ishmael Noko, the LWF's general secretary, and Bishop Walter Kasper, secretary of the Pontifical Council, embraced after adding their signatures to the document.

As the applause continued, the LWF's treasurer, Dr. Sigrun Mogedal of the Church of Norway, as well as the LWF's five vice-presidents—H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Parmata Abusu Ishaya, a member of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria; Dr. Prasanna Kumari, executive secretary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of India; Dr. Julius Filo, bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic, and Huberto Kirchheim, president of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil—added their signatures to the document.

Common ground

"We are witnessing a significant day in the history of our churches. For the first time in centuries, here in Augsburg, we are again setting foot on common ground," Krause told the congregation in his sermon. "Antagonism and frequently even enmity between our churches have been the source of conflicts, distress and suffering for many people, in many countries on this earth. May God give us new strength for reconciliation and the courage to seek peace."

In his sermon, Cassidy said, "We have succeeded in bringing here today a document that takes forward in a significant way the work of restoration of unity among the followers of Christ."

Pope John Paul II issued a statement in Rome immediately after the signing, describing the agreement as a "milestone on the not always easy road towards the restoration of full unity between Christians."

After the service, Anderson, who was a negotiator of the agreement as well as a signer, commented, "This is a critical breakthrough. It's the first major step toward

reconciliation between the two churches since the Reformation. Now we understand we have creeds in common, and that removes the taint of heresy from both sides.

"It's the difference between handling each other as if we were prickly sea urchins, and being able to shake hands."

The doctrine of justification—that people are saved by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, and have not done anything on their own to become "right with God"—stood at the core of many disputes between Lutherans and Roman Catholics since the 16th century.

The role of "good works" or "Christian living" is a related issue that Lutherans and Roman Catholics now say is "not church-dividing." Roman Catholics hold that good works contribute to growth in grace and that a reward in heaven is promised to these works, according to the declaration. Lutherans emphasize that justification is complete in Christ's saving work and that Christian living is a sign of unmerited love. Luther wrote his 95 theses in protest against the Roman Catholic Church, including the church's sale of indulgences, letters replacing punishment for the sins of repentant Christians.

Reporters asked Cassidy during a pre-service press conference if the pope's issuing a new Manual of Indulgences for the year 2000, in which Roman Catholics will be able to earn indulgences by visiting various historic sites during the church's "year of jubilee," contradicted the teachings described in the joint declaration. Cassidy said the pope put the indulgences in their proper place; indulgences come only from God and only after justification. He said that is in agreement with the joint declaration.

More talk needed

Though a significant step in doctrinal terms, the joint declaration does not mean that there is complete church fellowship or even eucharistic hospitality between the two traditions. During the weekend's events, Cassidy and Kasper stressed that further agreement on the nature of authority, the church and ministry was necessary before eucharistic sharing could be considered.

The choice of Augsburg for the signing ceremony was particularly significant since it was there in 1530 that followers of Luther presented the Augsburg Confession—a statement of Luther's teaching—to Emperor Charles V at an imperial gathering called by the emperor in an unsuccessful attempt to end the dispute between Protestants and Catholics. The city also has a long tradition of religious tolerance, in which both Catholics and Protestants have been freely able to practice their faith.

Services on the day of the signing began at Augsburg's Roman Catholic Cathedral, after which more than 2,000 people processed through the center of Augsburg for the signing ceremony. At St. Anna's Church the congregation included 50 Lutheran and Roman Catholic bishops from all continents, leaders of Germany's Russian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox churches, Dr. Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and other ecumenical guests. Outside, another 2,000 people watched the service on a giant television screen in a tent on Augsburg's city square.

Speaking after the ceremony, Kumari, a pastor and theologian currently serving as the executive secretary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in India, stressed the importance of the joint declaration for countries like India, where Christians are a small minority—2.6 per cent of the population.

"In a multi-religious and multi-cultural context it is essential [for Christians] to speak with one voice," she said, pointing out that she was often told by non-Christians: "You believe in one God, but you have so many denominations."

Three decades of dialogue

The LWF has 128 member churches in 70 countries representing 58 million of the world's 61.5 million Lutherans. According to the World Churches Handbook, published in London, the Roman Catholic Church has more than 900 million members. The signing of the joint declaration is the culmination of more than three decades of dialogue between the federation and the Roman Catholic Church that began soon after the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

Cassidy speaking to journalists in Augsburg before the official signing of the declaration, described the document as a "fine way of working in dialogue."

"We have discovered something we didn't realize existed before we came to it," he added. Pointing to the results of the first Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission he said there had previously been bilateral discussions whose results had been officially received by the participating churches. But the method adopted in the joint declaration might be a "better way," he suggested.

However, describing the joint declaration as being "very much a Lutheran-Roman Catholic document," he played down the idea that other confessions might be invited to add their name to the agreement declaration.

—Kathryn McCormick is associate director of News and Information for the Episcopal Church. This article was compiled from reports by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America news service, Ecumenical News International and The Washington Post.

09.165

Archbishop of Sydney vetoes lay presidency proposal

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) Archbishop Harry Goodhew of Sydney, Australia, has vetoed a controversial measure approved by the diocesan synod that would have allowed lay people as well as priests to celebrate Holy Communion.

"Having carefully and prayerfully weighed these matters I have decided to withhold my assent to the ordinance," Goodhew said in a statement sent to synod members. "I hope that members of the diocese will understanding my reasoning even if they cannot share it. I hope that those elsewhere who may be pleased with my decision will exercise similar restraint when dealing with the moral issues on which the bishops at Lambeth expressed such a clear view."

The synod voted two to one on October 19 to inaugurate a five-year trial of lay presidency, provided the bishop gave his approval. Had the bishop assented, the Diocese of Sydney—the largest in Australia and one of its most evangelically minded—would have been the first in the Anglican Communion to allow lay people to preside at the Eucharist.

Opponents of the measure at the synod meeting said that such a move was a fundamental break with Anglican tradition and practice, and warned it could split the Australian church and cut the Sydney diocese off from Anglicanism. One opponent said the proposal was an attack on the priesthood itself. But supporters of the move claimed that to prevent lay people from celebrating Holy Communion was going against Gospel teaching.

The primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Keith Rayner, declared that ratification of the synod's decision would be tantamount to starting a new church: "At the Reformation in the 16th century, the Anglican reformers made it clear that they were not starting a new church. The Sydney vote represents a fundamental break with the principles of the Anglican reformers."

No unilateral action

In announcing his veto, Goodhew indicated that there were three matters that emerged as the most important in coming to his decision.

The first was the strength of the synod voting. "It certainly has great weight with me," he said.

The second is "my role as a bishop in this Church." As a diocesan bishop he stated he is "bound to uphold the constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia."

The archbishop pointed out that a 1997 opinion of the Appellate Tribunal, the highest legal body in the Anglican Church of Australia, said that an individual diocese did not have the power to pass an ordinance of this kind without the authority of a General Synod canon. "This opinion cannot be taken lightly," he said.

"The impact on the Australian [Anglican] Church and the wider Communion" was the third area that weighed heavily in the archbishop's decision. In the months since the 1998 Lambeth Conference, Goodhew has been active with a number of other archbishops and primates from Asia, Africa and South America in calling on "liberal" bishops in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom not to act unilaterally on certain moral issues, including the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals and church recognitions and blessings of same-gender unions.

"I am particularly sensitive on this point because I have been engaged since Lambeth with other parts of the Communion arguing against unilateral action over crucial moral issues and attendant theological norms," Goodhew said. "To act unilaterally myself and without wide consultation would undermine my credibility in those ongoing debates."

The ordinance, which had been on the synod's agenda for some years, was passed on the final day of the synod's meeting this year. Lay persons and deacons would have been allowed under the ordinance to be officiants at services of the Holy Communion. The synod's terminology for this action is 'administration,' though it is commonly referred to as 'presidency' in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

International reactions

In London, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey immediately declared his opposition to the vote. "I am firmly committed to the priesthood of all believers," he said in a statement. "but do not feel that this negates the firm ontological basis of the ordained ministry which has been central to our understanding of the church."

Reform Ireland, an evangelical organization, supported the vote, commending the synod for its "pioneering spirit," and calling on the Church of Ireland to examine lay presidency. A statement from the group added, "We believe such a move to be consistent with the Bible's teaching of the priesthood of all believers, and beneficial to those parishes which do not have the regular services of an ordained presbyter."

With Goodhew's veto, the ordinance lapses and will not come into effect, although under church law the measure may be revived in a diocesan synod. If it is approved by that body, and by the provincial synod, it could come into force regardless of the bishop's opinion. However, observers say this is unlikely to happen with Sydney's ordinance, since there is no guarantee it would receive support in the provincial synod.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church. This article includes information from an Ecumenical News International article as well as a statement released by the office of the Archbishop of Sydney.

99-172

Black Clergy Conference celebrates shared past, plans for future

by Mary W. Cox and Terrence A. Taylor

Joining in solemn prayers and exuberant singing, more than 150 Afro-Anglican clergy from around the world met in Miami, Florida, October 4-7 for the Fifth Triennial Black Episcopal Clergy Conference.

With the theme "Journey Toward Pilgrimage: Reclaiming Our Common Heritage," the conference offered participants an opportunity to link their personal histories with the common history of people of African ancestry, and to address the issues that face black Episcopal clergy, their congregations and their communities.

The preacher for the opening service in Trinity Cathedral was the Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts, senior pastor of the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem and president-elect of the State University of New York in Old Westbury.

In a fiery sermon Butts reminded the clergy that the black church has always had a variety of roles in the community. The main role of black clergy is to uphold the norms and traditions of the church, remembering that they can serve as a stabilizing force in an ever-changing society.

Butts exhorted, "The black church must be a community of remembrance. It must stand together across denominations to tell the story. Our struggle is based on the blood, sweat and tears of our grandmothers and grandfathers." The keeping of traditions, however, should not blind the Church to the need for change, which comes, he said, "through prayer and the power of the Holy Ghost."

Reconciliation and justice

Butts criticized those who seek to take politics and other secular interests out of the faith kept by black Christians. He chided, "Reconciliation without justice is void." The black church, he said, was born in response to segregation and racism. "We were led to be what we are in response to the society in which we live."

He spoke of the importance of participating in the political and economic processes that will assist the Church in feeding the poor and aiding those who are being persecuted. He warned against the ease of saying the Church should refrain from involving itself in such issues.

Butts dismissed such philosophies, proclaiming, "If the Holy Spirit were not a part of who we are, we could not have come this far." He described leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and Martin Luther King, Jr., who used the church to elevate the struggles of blacks. Their witness would later, Butts observed, inspire Germans to sing "We Shall Overcome" as they tore down the Berlin Wall.

After the service, Butts admitted that, although he felt called to accept the invitation, initially he was a little hesitant about coming to address the Episcopal clergy. "Then I arrived, and I met brothers and sisters from Africa and the Caribbean, and I was struck by the commonalities of our struggle," he said. "Then I knew I had done the right thing."

At a luncheon on the second day of the conference, Drexel Gomez, archbishop of the West Indies and bishop of Nassau and the Bahamas, addressed participants on the topic of mission.

Mission 'from everywhere to everywhere'

He reminded the clergy that the mission of the church is "God's mission," in which they are partners, and said that the old concept of mission from the rich to the poor is "fundamentally flawed." Mission is now "from everywhere to everywhere."

In order to reach out intentionally to persons of color, the archbishop advised, the Episcopal Church needs to recover a sense of urgency—"let them know that what we have to say is...vital for their present and future well-being"—and a sense of clarity about the faith.

"We need translators," said Gomez, "people who can bring the message alive in their own setting."

"People want to see love in action...and some of our churches are the worst possible advertisement for love in action!" he added, urging the clergy to set aside "ill-feeling, rancor and petty politics" to focus on the demands of the Gospel and the priority of "God's agenda" for mission.

Mission that focuses only on the local church, Gomez said, is "sub-Christian." Mission must expand from the local church and the diocese to the cross-cultural and the global.

"We as black people," he said, "have a mandate to share with others the joy of the Gospel and our sense of being the church."

Black clergy and laity need to have "confidence in our own cultural expression, confidence in our ability to be purveyors of the Gospel."

"Our participation in the global mission," the archbishop emphasized, "must always be with the right motive—to share, not to exploit."

In a time for conversation with all seven black bishops present, Gomez joked that he had come to Miami "to get away from the hurricane"—parts of his diocese suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Floyd in September—but added seriously, that it was important for him to attend the conference "to be in solidarity with the brothers and sisters in the wider Church."

A homecoming

All of the bishops spoke of the importance of the triennial conference as a "homecoming" for black clergy from all parts of the church, a time for the clergy to get to know each other and to "have church" in the traditions of the black worship experience.

Franklin Turner, bishop suffragan of Pennsylvania and former national staff officer for Black Ministries, said these conferences grew out of the desire of black clergy, whose need for collegiality was often not being fulfilled in their own dioceses, to "get together and share their joys and woes...to find out what jobs were available—the good spots, hot spots, bad spots to avoid."

"Scattered out," he said, "we often came away with the feeling that we were invisible... We are more included now, but these gatherings will need to continue."

Turner said black clergy can offer the church "our gift of blackness," which the church needs "in order to be truly Catholic."

Asked about the conference's title, "Journey to Pilgrimage," Bishop Orris Walker of Long Island, a member of the conference design team, explained that the conference was envisioned as "a journey to get them [black clergy] into the pilgrim band."

"We have to go through a process to identify the common ground," he continued. "Until we understand the diversity of experience in the black community, we won't be able to move forward with vigor on our pilgrimage."

Walter Dennis, retired bishop suffragan of New York, added, "'Journey' has a certain arduousness about it; 'pilgrimage' is more positive."

Turner agreed: "On a pilgrimage, you encounter people and hear their stories."

Brand-new bishop

Meeting with the black bishops was the Rev. Wendell N. Gibbs, newly elected bishop of the Diocese of Michigan, the first African-American to be elected bishop in that diocese and the first African-American to be elected to the episcopate in the Episcopal Church since 1991.

Gibbs, 45, said he was told that his age had been more of an issue than his race for some Michigan delegates. "Someone heard 'What if we elect him, and he's not very good, and we're stuck with him for 20 years?' But I said, 'Well, what if I am good—just think, you'll have me for 20 years!'"

At the closing service of the conference, for which Gibbs was celebrant, the black clergy, led by the Rev. Lynn Collins, the Episcopal Church's staff officer for Black Ministries, laid hands on Gibbs and prayed for his new ministry, his family and his future in the church.

Looking toward the future, conference participants concurred on some priorities for the black Episcopal Church: Increased youth involvement; active recruitment of young people for ordained and lay ministries; a system of support and mentorship for those in lay and ordained ministries; prophetic ministry on social and economic issues—"a church of passion and justice"; meaningful worship styles for people of African ancestry; inclusivity in age and gender; "going beyond inclusivity" for black gay and lesbian clergy and laity; strong black and minority parishes; and more black bishops.

The conference concluded in a spirit of unity and celebration that broke out into joyous song with "This Little Light of Mine."

--Mary W. Cox is acting communications coordinator for the Diocese of Southeast Florida; Terrence A. Taylor is chair of the diocesan Commission on Racism, Justice and Reconciliation.

99-173

Bishops gain 'mutual respect' in talks on gays

Episcopal Life Staff

Ten Anglican bishops, including three primates, met in November at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York, to discuss their "diverse convictions" about homosexuality.

The bishops, "representing a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds," issued a statement afterward which said, "Within the atmosphere of prayer and through participation in the monastic rhythms of the Holy Cross community, the bishops entered into a process of structured dialogue on homosexuality within the larger context of human sexuality.

"With the guidance of experienced facilitators, trust and mutual respect grew as the bishops considered convergent (shared) and divergent (differing) points of view. The process of dialogue fostered a deep sense of the Spirit's presence in the midst of diverse convictions."

The meeting was set up at the request of Archbishop of Canterbury George L. Carey. Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold was host.

The consultation followed a decision at last year's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, which voted 526-70, with 45 abstentions, that homosexual practice was incompatible with Scripture, and that it "cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same-sex unions, nor the ordination of those involved in such unions." The resolution also called for the bishops "to listen to the experience of homosexual persons."

Besides Griswold, those present at Holy Cross Monastery were Bishop Simon Chiwanga of Tanzania, president of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), Bishop Terence Finlay of Canada, Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of Nigeria, Bishop Chilton Knudsen of Maine, Archbishop Peter Kwong of Hong Kong, Archbishop Glauco Soares de Lima of Brazil, Bishop John Lipscomb of Southwest Florida, Bishop Michael Scott-Joynt of England and Bishop Peter Watson of Australia.

The consultation was announced at the ACC's meeting in Dundee, Scotland, in September. Five supporters of gay rights met with the ACC then; Chiwanga called that meeting "a unique experience of testimony and witness."

Much of the support for the Lambeth declaration came from the Third World, with many bishops from the United States at the forefront of opposition. However, some bishops who backed the declaration later appeared to support a statement which went in the opposite direction: in October 1998, at least 179 bishops worldwide pledged themselves to work for "the full inclusion in the life of the church" of lesbian and gay Anglicans.

Ecumenical News International contributed to this story.

99-174

Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in U.S. releases statement on the church

(ENS) The Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the USA issued on November 15 its thirteenth joint statement, an *Agreed Report on the Local/Universal Church*. The report is a review of the status of the discussion between Anglicans and Catholics on the general topic of authority in the church and specifically in regard to the exercise of authority in the church.

In June 1996, ARC-USA agreed to begin a lengthy study of the church on how authority is exercised in both the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church. In four subsequent meetings, members of the U. S. dialogue prepared this agreed report to serve as an initial statement in their study.

ARC-USA's last meeting was in Baltimore, March 11-14, 1999, at which time members had agreed to specific revisions of their common text. A draft was then circulated by mail, and members had a final opportunity to suggest changes.

In the report the members of the dialogue agree on the definitions of the key terms of the study, summarize the current Anglican-Roman Catholic consensus on the relationship between the local church and the universal church, and then list areas where more discussion is needed, namely, the requirements for full communion, primacy and the bishop of Rome, the balance between the local and the universal church, and episcopacy and apostolicity.

Anglicans and Roman Catholics most often use the term "diocese" to refer to the local church, and that is how ARC-USA uses the term in this report. Anglicans and Roman Catholics also agree that the universal church is more than an aggregate of local churches, that the local church and the universal church are fully interdependent, and that proper balance between the two is necessary. It is on the question of "balance" between the local church and the universal church that differences arise between Anglicans and Catholics, and these need to be explored further.

ARC-USA will begin to take up these differences at its next meeting in January at Marywood Center in Jacksonville. They will begin with the relationships between the Anglican Communion and the independent provinces—for example the Episcopal Church—which constitute that communion, and the relationship between national Catholic episcopal conferences, one expression of collegiality among bishops in the Roman Catholic Church, and the universal church.

At their January meeting they will also begin their study of the recently released agreed statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority*. This statement, also titled "Authority III," referring back to two previous agreed statements of ARCIC, also takes up the topic of the exercise of the authority in the church and concludes by naming certain "advances in agreement" and raises specific issues facing Anglicans and Catholics.

"The report of ARC-USA represents a placeholder for us on our dialogue with the Episcopal Church from which we can measure our understandings of full communion and the exercise of authority in the church," stated Bishop John J. Snyder of St. Augustine, Catholic Co-Chairman of the dialogue. Bishop Ted Gulick of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky is the Anglican Co-Chairman.

"We know that the general topic of authority is the remaining one from the original three areas (Eucharist and Ministry and Ordination), identified by those who planned the

formal dialogues, where consensus has yet to be achieved; and our statement is a first step for the dialogue in the United States and should be studied also in light of *The Gift of Authority*," Bishop Snyder said.

ARC-USA was founded in 1965 and is co-sponsored by the Standing Commission for Ecumenical Relations of the Episcopal Church and the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Two volumes of ARC-USA agreements and other ARC agreed texts, including those of the international commission, have been published: *Called to Full Unity: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations 1966-1983* (1986) and *Common Witness to the Gospel: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations 1983-1995* (1997).

99-175

Loren Mead and Bill Andersen Honored by Episcopal Church Foundation

by Lindsay Hardin Freeman

Directors of the Episcopal Church Foundation commended two church leaders for exemplary service at the Foundation's 50th anniversary celebration on November 4 in New York City.

Receiving the prestigious Henry Knox Sherrill Award was the Rev. Loren B. Mead, educator, consultant, author and Alban Institute founder. The last person to receive the award was President George H.W. Bush at the White House. Mead was honored for his many years of significant contributions to the life of the Episcopal Church, especially in the area of congregational studies.

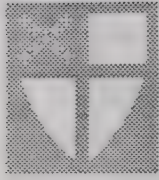
Citing Mead as a man "who has in every way given leadership and enrichment to countless people inside and outside of the Episcopal Church," Foundation President George Allen Fowlkes praised Mead for his founding of the Alban Institute and his wise counsel with several foundation programs.

William G. Andersen, Jr., executive director of the foundation, was commended for outstanding leadership in a letter of recognition from George Fowlkes and Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, chairman of the board. "Your leadership has made a lasting difference," said Fowlkes. "We commend you for a job well done."

Executive director of the foundation since 1992, Andersen was recognized for strengthening the foundation's ministries in education, religious philanthropy and leadership development.

Since 1949, the Episcopal Church Foundation has served the Episcopal Church and its members through a wide array of services. Currently, it focuses on three areas: education, leadership development and the ministry of planned giving. Approximately \$25 million is under management by the foundation for future work in parishes, dioceses and Episcopal agencies.

--The Rev. Lindsay Hardin Freeman is priest associate at St. Martin's-by-the-Lake Episcopal Church in Minnetonka Beach, Minnesota.



news digest

99-166D

Executive Council receives warm welcome in flood-ravaged Honduras

(ENS) In a rare meeting outside of the United States, the church's Executive Council met in Honduras—and was embraced in a special way by the people and the problems of a vibrant and growing diocese.

It began when many council members joined the work crews building the first 35 houses out of 95 planned at a new village outside of San Pedro Sula, a commercial hub where the diocesan headquarters and cathedral are located. A year after the devastation of Hurricane Mitch, the houses and a clinic were blessed by council members and ground was broken for a chapel.

"To come back here less than a year after the hurricane and see what has been possible is nothing less than a miracle," said Phoebe Griswold, who has traveled in the area with a team from the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. The "Faith, Hope and Joy" project is the first directly sponsored by the fund. (A meeting of the fund's board after the council meeting approved the purchase of additional land, adjacent to the village, enough for another 100 homes).

The bare patch of land she first visited last year now supports several housing projects, including one nearby that is sponsored by Habitat for Humanity and the South American Missionary Society. She expressed particular excitement with the new clinic, named for her husband, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold.

"But we are building community, not just houses," she said, pointing out that a soccer field and garden are also part of the plans. And there will be a clean, safe water supply, thanks to a water purification system designed by an Episcopalian from South Carolina who is an environmental scientist.

Council members agreed that working together on the project had been a unifying force for the council itself, giving its decision-making a mission context. Some expressed an eagerness to return in another year to see how the village develops when it is filled with families--and the laughter of children.

"The poor of Honduras angrily ask why God abandoned them—but you have helped us answer the question," said Bishop Leo Frade in welcoming the council. He described a

diocese that combines evangelism with social action, a diocese that is growing with about 20,000 members in 67 parishes and 15 missions, served by 45 priests and deacons.

Later in the meeting Frade would strongly endorse a resolution calling on the U.S. government to halt its policy that deports Hondurans who lack legal immigration status, threatening the country's economic recovery.

For many council members, the highlight of the encounter with the people of Honduras came at a festival Eucharist—or a Eucharist that was a festival.

Over a thousand people jammed the Catedral El Buen Pastor and an adjacent courtyard with television monitors to catch the exuberant service. Many had traveled through the night to be present. "I know now what it is like to be in the center of a cloud of witnesses," said Bishop Christopher Epting of Iowa, who helped distribute communion. Judge Jim Bradberry of Virginia called it "the richest liturgical experience" he ever had.

The recently refurbished cathedral was flooded with light as the procession of bishops and clergy and guests was greeted with lively music. Youth in native costume brought forward the gifts of the earth during the offertory and placed them in front of the altar. The sanctuary was quickly filled with incense. The presiding bishop celebrated and preached in Spanish, receiving murmurs of surprise and appreciation.

After the service the participants were inundated with confetti and glitters as they moved out of the cathedral and boarded buses for a visit to the diocesan-sponsored home for abandoned, orphaned and abused girls. Our Little Roses was founded by Diana Frade, council member and wife of the bishop of Honduras. Following lunch a choir from the home sang a special song they had written for the presiding bishop.

As General Convention approaches "the siren calls to preserve right-thinking by rejecting each other are becoming louder," warned Pamela Chinnis, president of the House of Deputies in her comments. "We, as leaders of the church, must do our utmost to raise the hospitable option again and again, to model openness and welcome for 'the other,' whatever our perspective or vested interest."

With persistent prodding by the church's treasurer, Steve Duggan, the council continued its efforts to design a more flexible budget process, one that can respond to emerging challenges. He expressed frustration with the resolutions passed at the Philadelphia General Convention that had financial implications with no way to respond. "Can we build a budget process that is flexible and accountable, one that expresses a dynamic church?" he asked.

Griswold asked a similar question in his opening remarks: "How is the budget a manifestation of the Gospel for the purpose of mission? How could we structure the budget so that it is possible to respond creatively to new opportunities?"

Council members received a draft of the proposed budget for the next triennium which it will review at its January meeting. —by James Solheim

99-167D

Congress passes debt relief measure to aid poor countries

(ENS) Against long political odds, Episcopal, Catholic and Protestant churches in the U.S. came together and successfully pushed a legislative package through Congress to

provide debt relief for poor countries. "We haven't seen this sort of push from the churches since the anti-Apartheid movement," said Thomas H. Hart, director of government relations for the Episcopal Church.

Late on the night of November 15, congressional and White House negotiators overcame lingering disagreements on how to let the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cancel some of its loans to poor countries. The deal finalized one of the few remaining issues in federal budget negotiations, paving the way for Congress to adjourn.

The agreement allows the IMF to revalue part of its gold, releasing a profit of more than \$2 billion to fund debt relief for the world's poorest nations. The IMF is permitted to use most of that profit now, but will need further Congressional authorization next spring to use the rest. In return, the IMF agreed to make information about its dealings more open and available to Congress.

The revaluation required Congressional approval because the gold is owned by the U.S. and other members of the IMF.

"The odds were against us," Hart said. "We faced budget constraints, public cynicism, congressional resistance to foreign assistance, a complex international financial subject—not to mention that, on its surface, canceling debts is a tough sell." All of these challenges were present amid the common perception that the mainline churches have been in decline, both in membership and influence. "This is an important demonstration of what we can do," Hart continued.

Supporters of debt relief on Capitol Hill particularly noted the work of the Episcopal Church. "The Episcopal Church was a key organization in this effort, effectively translating the Biblical vision of Jubilee into workable public policy and achieving real results on behalf of poor people around the world," said U.S. Rep. Jim Leach, a Republican from Iowa and lead sponsor of debt relief legislation. "As an Episcopalian, I am particularly grateful for our church's leadership in securing congressional approval for debt relief."

Sen. Joseph Biden, ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a cosponsor of debt relief legislation, concurred. "I applaud the efforts of the Episcopal Church and the many organizations who came together to raise and move this issue before the Congress and Administration, particularly in a very difficult political environment," Biden said the morning following passage of the bill.

"Of course, there is still work to be done," Hart explained. "Congress hasn't yet made a U.S. contribution to write down some multilateral debts held by regional development banks." But, the current deal includes money to write off the debts owed directly to the U.S., approval for the IMF to use gold and some contingency accounts for debt relief, and a mandate to direct the relief to the poor in an transparent and accountable way. "Getting three out of four isn't bad," Hart concluded.

Most analysts predict this package will be enough to set in motion an international agreement among the Group of Seven—the largest industrialized countries—and other creditor nations to leverage nearly \$90 billion in debt relief to the world's poorest countries. The U.S. holds only 3 percent of all poor country debt.

The Episcopal Church worked closely with the U.S. Catholic Conference, Oxfam America, Bread for the World, and Church World Service to move this initiative on Capitol Hill.

99-168D

Presiding bishop's pastoral visit to Colombia finds nation and church under threat

(ENS) The bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Colombia finds it very difficult to even speak of the future of his country without fighting back the tears.

Bishop Bernardo Merino, who has been bishop since 1979, has watched for decades as civil strife has shredded the fabric of his nation. It is difficult to live under the constant threat of violence, he tells his visitors from the United States.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold found his pastoral visit to South America, where he met with the bishops of the area, a very sobering experience. "These are small dioceses, working under very difficult political conditions—and yet they are a part of us, part of our reality as a church. They extend our horizons, giving us a richer sense of what it means to be the body of Christ in difficult circumstances."

During conversations with the bishops of Colombia, Venezuela, and the two dioceses in Ecuador, they talked of their common concerns: education for their clergy, the isolation and need for collegiality, and the endless search for peace in the area. "It was important that they come together to share their burdens with me and with each other because they felt strengthened by their time together," Griswold said. "And it is an important part of my role."

The first thing one notices on the streets of Bogota is the number of kids with guns. Police are everywhere in this teeming city of six million, a city plagued with random violence, drug trafficking and kidnapping that have been a part of life for at least three decades. A new government, which seems to have more credibility, has opened negotiations with the country's principal Marxist guerrilla group but, after so many false starts, most people have adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

The frustrated people of Colombia have launched a series of protest marches in 700 cities and towns across the nation, demanding respect for human rights and an end to the cycle of violence that has claimed 35,000 lives in the last decade and sent another 1.5 million people into internal displacement. Relief agencies describe their plight as the most serious human emergency in the Western Hemisphere, claiming that in numerical terms it is worse than East Timor, Chechnya or even Kosovo, although it has attracted little international attention in comparison.

The situation is complicated even more by the country's worst recession in 70 years, making any attempt to help the displaced, especially those affected by last January's earthquake, a point of resentment, according to reports.

The demonstrations, which have drawn millions of the country's 40 million people, have been organized by a civic group called "No Mas," or "No More." The presiding bishop's party, which included his wife Phoebe and the Rev. Ricardo Potter, saw billboards in Bogota with the slogan "No mas. Vamos por la paz," urging people to work for peace. And the small green ribbons symbolizing the movement were sprouting like tender shoots of hope on the streets of Bogota.

Merino said that, as a man of faith, he clings to hope. "Trust in God. Trust in Colombia and its people," he says wistfully.

During conversations with church leaders in the diocese, it is obvious that most trace the history of violence back to a 1948 civil war known as La Violencia between the Liberal and Conservative parties that left 200,000 dead and shattered the political balance. "We have

never been the same because there is just no common commitment to a political process," said one priest. Others described escalating poverty, fed by violence and natural disasters.

In a meeting with the presiding bishop, clergy of the diocese described their ministries. Most of them hold secular jobs, as lawyers, teachers, a pilot, accountant and soldier. Despite the hardships, most expressed deep satisfaction in making a difference in their ministry.

A lawyer-priest expressed a conviction that Anglicans have a gift to offer—the need for tolerance and a message of peace, a commitment to pluralism. Our contribution, he said, is to build a sense of community. He added that Anglicans seemed to be the only ones working to improve the status of women in society.

During a Eucharist on November 3, Merino welcomed the presiding bishop and the other South American bishops to "this beleaguered country, living the worst part of its history. It has not been easy to be a bishop here," he added. In addition to presiding and preaching, Griswold dedicated a banner for the cathedral incorporating the green ribbon that symbolizes the No Mas Movement.

In a later conversation, Phoebe Griswold said that she had been deeply moved by the visit to Colombia, especially hearing the stories of the young priests ministering under dangerous conditions. She expressed special concern and sadness over the apparent isolation, however. "We must find a companion relationship for the Diocese of Colombia, someone who understands the ministry of reconciliation, people who appreciate the situation of this church in such a troubled nation," she said.

Finding a direct tie to other dioceses of the Episcopal Church "would help us to understand the immense variety of our church," she added. "We can't isolate them because we are afraid of the political situation."—James Solheim

99-169D

NCC's 50th anniversary celebrates the past, and restructures for the future

(ENS) The National Council of Churches (NCC) of Christ in the USA celebrated its 50th anniversary by reflecting on its role in the ecumenical movement, embracing new leadership, and adopting a sweeping restructure to take it into a new millennium.

In a sprawling four-day November meeting marked by forums on a wide range of issues, worship services, reunions, caucuses and even a special concert by the Cleveland Orchestra, the future of the organization was on the minds of everyone.

Meeting in the same auditorium in Cleveland where it was formed nearly 50 years ago, delegates to the NCC General Assembly gathered under a cloud of uncertainty, facing some predictions that a looming financial crisis threatened its future. That pessimism was balanced, however, with a genuine excitement over the election of Ambassador Andrew Young as president and former Congressman Robert Edgar, president of Claremont Seminary in California, as general secretary, two preacher-politicians with enough organizational ability to make the changes necessary.

Edgar and Young inherit an organization that has enjoyed some glorious moments in the past, championing social causes, especially during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and produced two translations of the Bible that have sold over 70 million copies.

For a variety of reasons, however, support for the council has dwindled. The Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, who is finishing nine years as general secretary, attributed the decline to some changes in the ecumenical movement itself, with more attention and support going to local causes and ecumenical cooperation.

Meeting behind closed doors, the NCC Governing Board shaped the proposals that went to the General Assembly. Bishop Craig Anderson of the Episcopal Church, who is finishing his term as NCC president, said that the restructuring was like "trying to ride a bicycle while we're still trying to build it." Someone else described the NCC as a camel with 35 humps, each representing one of its members.

While many of the details must be worked out, it is clear that the New York-based staff will be cut by at least a third, or 34 positions, including three associate general secretaries and four high-level directors. Anderson made an "impassioned plea to be together and work for what we are about—the unity of the body of Christ—and not be pulled apart and fragmented, which is sin."

In an effort to work within what was called a "fiscal framework," the NCC Executive Board must deal with a shortfall in 1999 of nearly \$4 million.

Just before the meeting the NCC got involved in a story that illustrates its ability to put items on the human rights agenda. Responding to a request from the National Council of Churches in Korea, the NCC asked the Pentagon last December to look into detailed testimony from survivors of a massacre of 400 civilians 50 years ago by U.S. soldiers at No Gun Ri. The account was dismissed by both the U.S. and Korean governments. Then some veterans, in an Associated Press story September 29, admitted that they had participated in the massacre.

Four massacre survivors and three veterans came to Cleveland for an emotional service of recognition and remembrance, lighting candles to illuminate "the deepest corners of our hurt and our fear and our guilt." After the meeting, the group traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials who promised to look into the charges.

Campbell said that the service and meeting is "exactly the kind of 'truth and reconciliation' work the church should be and is doing all over the world."

At a news conference later Young did not seem disturbed by the NCC's financial crisis, suggesting that it has always been in financial trouble. He suggested that his experience of helping to restructure city government in Atlanta will help in the NCC restructure.

"I get to stand in the way of the Holy Spirit," he said. "Organizing 35 communions and the people in them to take seriously the covenants in the Old and New Testaments is a challenge I'm ready to take." —by James Solheim

99-170D

482 years after Luther's protest, Lutherans and Catholics reach agreement

(ENS) On October 31, 482 years to the day after Martin Luther nailed on a church door his list of 95 theses, thus launching the Lutheran Reformation, Lutherans and Roman Catholics solemnly declared that mutual condemnations from the Reformation era no longer apply.

Before a congregation of 750 church leaders and journalists that filled St. Anna's Lutheran Church in Augsburg, Germany, Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Lutheran Bishop Christian Krause, president of the Lutheran World Federation, signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

According to the document, there is now "a consensus in basic truths" between Lutherans and Catholics on the doctrine of justification—one of the most contentious issues that divided Luther and his followers from the papacy. As a result the "mutual doctrinal condemnations do not apply to the teaching of the dialogue partners as presented in the joint declaration."

Spontaneous applause broke out in the church as Dr. Ishmael Noko, the LWF's general secretary, and Bishop Walter Kasper, secretary of the Pontifical Council, embraced after adding their signatures to the document.

As the applause continued, the LWF's treasurer, Dr. Sigrun Mogedal of the Church of Norway, as well as the LWF's five vice-presidents—H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Parmata Abusu Ishaya, a member of the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria; Dr. Prasanna Kumari, executive secretary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of India; Dr. Julius Filo, bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic, and Huberto Kirchheim, president of the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil—added their signatures to the document.

After the service, Anderson, who was a negotiator of the agreement as well as a signer, commented, "This is a critical breakthrough. It's the first major step toward reconciliation between the two churches since the Reformation. Now we understand we have creeds in common, and that removes the taint of heresy from both sides.

"It's the difference between handling each other as if we were prickly sea urchins, and being able to shake hands."

The doctrine of justification—that people are saved by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, and have not done anything on their own to become "right with God"—stood at the core of many disputes between Lutherans and Roman Catholics since the 16th century.

The role of "good works" or "Christian living" is a related issue that Lutherans and Roman Catholics now say is "not church-dividing." Roman Catholics hold that good works contribute to growth in grace and that a reward in heaven is promised to these works, according to the declaration. Lutherans emphasize that justification is complete in Christ's saving work and that Christian living is a sign of unmerited love. Luther wrote his 95 theses in protest against the Roman Catholic Church, including the church's sale of indulgences, letters replacing punishment for the sins of repentant Christians.

Though a significant step in doctrinal terms, the joint declaration does not mean that there is complete church fellowship or even eucharistic hospitality between the two traditions. During the weekend's events, Cassidy and Kasper stressed that further agreement on the nature of authority, the church and ministry was necessary before eucharistic sharing could be considered.

The choice of Augsburg for the signing ceremony was particularly significant since it was there in 1530 that followers of Luther presented the Augsburg Confession—a statement of Luther's teaching—to Emperor Charles V at an imperial gathering called by the emperor in an unsuccessful attempt to end the dispute between Protestants and Catholics. The city also has a long tradition of religious tolerance, in which both Catholics and Protestants have been freely able to practice their faith.

The LWF has 128 member churches in 70 countries representing 58 million of the world's 61.5 million Lutherans. According to the World Churches Handbook, published in London, the Roman Catholic Church has more than 900 million members. The signing of the joint declaration is the culmination of more than three decades of dialogue between the federation and the Roman Catholic Church that began soon after the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965.—**Kathryn McCormick**

99-171D

Archbishop of Sydney vetoes lay presidency proposal

(ENS) Archbishop Harry Goodhew of Sydney, Australia, has vetoed a controversial measure approved by the diocesan synod that would have allowed lay people as well as priests to celebrate Holy Communion.

"Having carefully and prayerfully weighed these matters I have decided to withhold my assent to the ordinance," Goodhew said in a statement sent to synod members. "I hope that members of the diocese will understanding my reasoning even if they cannot share it. I hope that those elsewhere who may be pleased with my decision will exercise similar restraint when dealing with the moral issues on which the bishops at Lambeth expressed such a clear view."

The synod voted two to one on October 19 to inaugurate a five-year trial of lay presidency, provided the bishop gave his approval. Had the bishop assented, the Diocese of Sydney—the largest in Australia and one of its most evangelically minded—would have been the first in the Anglican Communion to allow lay people to preside at the Eucharist.

Opponents of the measure at the synod meeting said that such a move was a fundamental break with Anglican tradition and practice, and warned it could split the Australian church and cut the Sydney diocese off from Anglicanism. One opponent said the proposal was an attack on the priesthood itself. But supporters of the move claimed that to prevent lay people from celebrating Holy Communion was going against Gospel teaching.

The primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, Archbishop Keith Rayner, declared that ratification of the synod's decision would be tantamount to starting a new church: "At the Reformation in the 16th century, the Anglican reformers made it clear that they were not starting a new church. The Sydney vote represents a fundamental break with the principles of the Anglican reformers."

No unilateral action

In announcing his veto, Goodhew indicated that there were three matters that emerged as the most important in coming to his decision.

The first was the strength of the synod voting. "It certainly has great weight with me," he said.

The second is "my role as a bishop in this Church." As a diocesan bishop he stated he is "bound to uphold the constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia."

The archbishop pointed out that a 1997 opinion of the Appellate Tribunal, the highest legal body in the Anglican Church of Australia, said that an individual diocese did not have the power to pass an ordinance of this kind without the authority of a General Synod canon. "This opinion cannot be taken lightly," he said.

"The impact on the Australian [Anglican] Church and the wider Communion" was the third area that weighed heavily in the archbishop's decision. In the months since the 1998 Lambeth Conference, Goodhew has been active with a number of other archbishops and primates from Asia, Africa and South America in calling on "liberal" bishops in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom not to act unilaterally on certain moral issues, including the ordination of non-celibate homosexuals and church recognitions and blessings of same-gender unions.

International reactions

In London, Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey immediately declared his opposition to the vote. "I am firmly committed to the priesthood of all believers," he said in a statement. "but do not feel that this negates the firm ontological basis of the ordained ministry which has been central to our understanding of the church."

With Goodhew's veto, the ordinance lapses and will not come into effect, although under church law the measure may be revived in a diocesan synod. If it is approved by that body, and by the provincial synod, it could come into force regardless of the bishop's opinion. However, observers say this is unlikely to happen with Sydney's ordinance, since there is no guarantee it would receive support in the provincial synod.—**Kathryn McCormick**

99-172D

Black Clergy Conference celebrates shared past, plans for future

by **Mary W. Cox and Terrence A. Taylor**

Joining in solemn prayers and exuberant singing, more than 150 Afro-Anglican clergy from around the world met in Miami, Florida, October 4-7 for the Fifth Triennial Black Episcopal Clergy Conference.

With the theme "Journey Toward Pilgrimage: Reclaiming Our Common Heritage," the conference offered participants an opportunity to link their personal histories with the common history of people of African ancestry, and to address the issues that face black Episcopal clergy, their congregations and their communities.

The preacher for the opening service in Trinity Cathedral was the Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts, senior pastor of the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem and president-elect of the State University of New York in Old Westbury.

In a fiery sermon Butts reminded the clergy that the black church has always had a variety of roles in the community. The main role of black clergy is to uphold the norms and traditions of the church, remembering that they can serve as a stabilizing force in an ever-changing society.

Butts exhorted, "The black church must be a community of remembrance. It must stand together across denominations to tell the story. Our struggle is based on the blood, sweat and tears of our grandmothers and grandfathers." The keeping of traditions, however, should not blind the Church to the need for change, which comes, he said, "through prayer and the power of the Holy Ghost."

Butts criticized those who seek to take politics and other secular interests out of the faith kept by black Christians. He chided, "Reconciliation without justice is void." The black church, he said, was born in response to segregation and racism. "We were led to be what we are in response to the society in which we live."

After the service, Butts admitted that, although he felt called to accept the invitation, initially he was a little hesitant about coming to address the Episcopal clergy. "Then I arrived, and I met brothers and sisters from Africa and the Caribbean, and I was struck by the commonalities of our struggle," he said. "Then I knew I had done the right thing."

At a luncheon on the second day of the conference, Drexel Gomez, archbishop of the West Indies and bishop of Nassau and the Bahamas, addressed participants on the topic of mission.

He reminded the clergy that the mission of the church is "God's mission," in which they are partners, and said that the old concept of mission from the rich to the poor is "fundamentally flawed." Mission is now "from everywhere to everywhere."

In order to reach out intentionally to persons of color, the archbishop advised, the Episcopal Church needs to recover a sense of urgency—"let them know that what we have to say is...vital for their present and future well-being"—and a sense of clarity about the faith.

"We need translators," said Gomez, "people who can bring the message alive in their own setting."

All of the seven bishops who attended the conference spoke of the importance of the gathering as a "homecoming" for black clergy from all parts of the church, a time for the clergy to get to know each other and to "have church" in the traditions of the black worship experience.

Franklin Turner, bishop suffragan of Pennsylvania and former national staff officer for Black Ministries, said these conferences grew out of the desire of black clergy, whose need for collegiality was often not being fulfilled in their own dioceses, to "get together and share their joys and woes...to find out what jobs were available—the good spots, hot spots, bad spots to avoid."

Meeting with the black bishops was the Rev. Wendell N. Gibbs, newly elected bishop of the Diocese of Michigan, the first African-American to be elected bishop in that diocese and the first African-American to be elected to the episcopate in the Episcopal Church since 1991.

Gibbs, 45, said he was told that his age had been more of an issue than his race for some Michigan delegates. "Someone heard 'What if we elect him, and he's not very good, and we're stuck with him for 20 years?' But I said, 'Well, what if I am good—just think, you'll have me for 20 years!'"

At the closing service of the conference, for which Gibbs was celebrant, the black clergy, led by the Rev. Lynn Collins, the Episcopal Church's staff officer for Black Ministries, laid hands on Gibbs and prayed for his new ministry, his family and his future in the church.

Looking toward the future, conference participants concurred on some priorities for the black Episcopal Church: Increased youth involvement; active recruitment of young people for ordained and lay ministries; a system of support and mentorship for those in lay and ordained ministries; prophetic ministry on social and economic issues—"a church of passion and justice"; meaningful worship styles for people of African ancestry; inclusivity in age and gender; "going beyond inclusivity" for black gay and lesbian clergy and laity; strong black and minority parishes; and more black bishops.

—Mary W. Cox and Terrence A. Taylor

99-173D

Bishops gain 'mutual respect' in talks on gays

Episcopal Life Staff

Ten Anglican bishops, including three primates, met in November at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York, to discuss their "diverse convictions" about homosexuality.

The bishops, "representing a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds," issued a statement afterward which said, "Within the atmosphere of prayer and through participation in the monastic rhythms of the Holy Cross community, the bishops entered into a process of structured dialogue on homosexuality within the larger context of human sexuality.

"With the guidance of experienced facilitators, trust and mutual respect grew as the bishops considered convergent (shared) and divergent (differing) points of view. The process of dialogue fostered a deep sense of the Spirit's presence in the midst of diverse convictions."

The meeting was set up at the request of Archbishop of Canterbury George L. Carey. Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold was host.

The consultation followed a decision at last year's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, which voted 526-70, with 45 abstentions, that homosexual practice was incompatible with Scripture, and that it "cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same-sex unions, nor the ordination of those involved in such unions." The resolution also called for the bishops "to listen to the experience of homosexual persons."

Besides Griswold, those present at Holy Cross Monastery were Bishop Simon Chiwanga of Tanzania, president of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), Bishop Terence Finlay of Canada, Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of Nigeria, Bishop Chilton Knudsen of Maine, Archbishop Peter Kwong of Hong Kong, Archbishop Glauco Soares de Lima of Brazil, Bishop John Lipscomb of Southwest Florida, Bishop Michael Scott-Joynt of England and Bishop Peter Watson of Australia.

The consultation was announced at the ACC's meeting in Dundee, Scotland, in September. Five supporters of gay rights met with the ACC then; Chiwanga called that meeting "a unique experience of testimony and witness."

Much of the support for the Lambeth declaration came from the Third World, with many bishops from the United States at the forefront of opposition. However, some bishops who backed the declaration later appeared to support a statement which went in the opposite direction: in October 1998, at least 179 bishops worldwide pledged themselves to work for "the full inclusion in the life of the church" of lesbian and gay Anglicans.

Ecumenical News International contributed to this story.

99-174D

Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in U.S. releases statement on the church

(ENS) The Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation in the USA issued on November 15 its thirteenth joint statement, an *Agreed Report on the Local/Universal Church*. The report is a review of the status of the discussion between Anglicans and Catholics on the general topic of authority in the church and specifically in regard to the exercise of authority in the church.

In June 1996, ARC-USA agreed to begin a lengthy study of the church on how authority is exercised in both the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church. In four subsequent meetings, members of the U. S. dialogue prepared this agreed report to serve as an initial statement in their study.

ARC-USA's last meeting was in Baltimore, March 11-14, 1999, at which time members had agreed to specific revisions of their common text. A draft was then circulated by mail, and members had a final opportunity to suggest changes.

In the report the members of the dialogue agree on the definitions of the key terms of the study, summarize the current Anglican-Roman Catholic consensus on the relationship between the local church and the universal church, and then list areas where more discussion is needed, namely, the requirements for full communion, primacy and the bishop of Rome, the balance between the local and the universal church, and episcopacy and apostolicity.

Anglicans and Roman Catholics most often use the term "diocese" to refer to the local church, and that is how ARC-USA uses the term in this report. Anglicans and Roman Catholics also agree that the universal church is more than an aggregate of local churches, that the local church and the universal church are fully interdependent, and that proper balance between the two is necessary. It is on the question of "balance" between the local church and the universal church that differences arise between Anglicans and Catholics, and these need to be explored further.

ARC-USA will begin to take up these differences at its next meeting in January at Marywood Center in Jacksonville. They will begin with the relationships between the Anglican Communion and the independent provinces—for example the Episcopal Church—which constitute that communion, and the relationship between national Catholic episcopal conferences, one expression of collegiality among bishops in the Roman Catholic Church, and the universal church.

At their January meeting they will also begin their study of the recently released agreed statement of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority*. This statement, also titled "Authority III," referring back to two previous agreed statements of ARCIC, also takes up the topic of the exercise of the authority in the church and concludes by naming certain "advances in agreement" and raises specific issues facing Anglicans and Catholics.

"The report of ARC-USA represents a placeholder for us on our dialogue with the Episcopal Church from which we can measure our understandings of full communion and the exercise of authority in the church," stated Bishop John J. Snyder of St. Augustine, Catholic Co-Chairman of the dialogue. Bishop Ted Gulick of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky is the Anglican Co-Chairman.

99-175D

Loren Mead and Bill Andersen Honored by Episcopal Church Foundation

by Lindsay Hardin Freeman

Directors of the Episcopal Church Foundation commended two church leaders for exemplary service at the Foundation's 50th anniversary celebration on November 4 in New York City.

Receiving the prestigious Henry Knox Sherrill Award was the Rev. Loren B. Mead, educator, consultant, author and Alban Institute founder. The last person to receive the award was President George H.W. Bush at the White House. Mead was honored for his many years of significant contributions to the life of the Episcopal Church, especially in the area of congregational studies.

Citing Mead as a man "who has in every way given leadership and enrichment to countless people inside and outside of the Episcopal Church," Foundation President George Allen Fowlkes praised Mead for his founding of the Alban Institute and his wise counsel with several foundation programs.

William G. Andersen, Jr., executive director of the foundation, was commended for outstanding leadership in a letter of recognition from George Fowlkes and Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, chairman of the board. "Your leadership has made a lasting difference," said Fowlkes. "We commend you for a job well done."

Executive director of the foundation since 1992, Andersen was recognized for strengthening the foundation's ministries in education, religious philanthropy and leadership development.

Since 1949, the Episcopal Church Foundation has served the Episcopal Church and its members through a wide array of services. Currently, it focuses on three areas: education, leadership development and the ministry of planned giving. Approximately \$25 million is under management by the foundation for future work in parishes, dioceses and Episcopal agencies.

--The Rev. Lindsay Hardin Freeman is priest associate at St. Martin's-by-the-Lake Episcopal Church in Minnetonka Beach, Minnesota.



news briefs

99-176

Society for Ministry on Aging to close office

(ENS) Bowing to the realities of declining support and membership, the board of the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging, Inc., (ESMA) voted in October to close its office and release Joan Lukens as executive director effective November 30. Mail will continue to be received at the present address until December 31. As of January 1, the new address for minimal ongoing operations will be: ESMA, P.O. Box 3065, Meridian MS 39303; phone number (601) 485-0311; e-mail: info@esmanet.com

Since 1995, the first year ESMA was excluded from the budget of the national church, costs of operation have exceeded income, said ESMA President Barbara Dobrosky. In spite of the extraordinary success achieved with the web site (www.esmanet.com) established in 1997, the work of providing "Age in Action" as a church-wide resource and an ongoing ministry focusing on the ever-increasing aging population has proved too large a task in the face of diminishing support from throughout the Episcopal Church.

Plans call for the board of directors to continue the goals of the society, maintain the web site and provide advocacy, within the church, for ministry to, with, for and by our elder population. Dobrosky affirmed, "The society continues to be committed to a ministry that calls forth the talents, wisdom and valued experiences of our senior members as gifts to our Lord and his church."

During the current ongoing revisioning process, the board invites inquiries by dioceses, institutions and individuals seeking membership as a way to continue working with the aging.

ELCA council requests data for study on gay ordination

(ELCA) At its November 12-14 meeting, the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) asked its Department for Research and Evaluation to prepare a "feasibility report" on the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian people.

Currently, non-celibate gay and lesbian people are precluded from the ordained ministry in the ELCA. The council's action is in response to a motion considered by the 1999 Churchwide Assembly which resulted in the assembly's reference and counsel committee

referring the matter to the Church Council, asking that the council determine whether to initiate the study based on the department's evaluation.

Kenneth W. Inskeep, director of the Department for Research and Evaluation, told the council the costs of a study regarding the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian people would vary depending on the type and degrees of study the council wants to do.

"It's going to have costs," Inskeep said. "The question for us is what's adequate to gather this information." The feasibility report is expected to be presented at the April 2000 council meeting.

If the council chooses to approve a formal study, it would be one piece of data the council could use to confront the entire question of possibly ordaining non-celibate gay and lesbian people, said the Rev. Robert L. Dasher, council member, from South Carolina.

This year the ELCA completed a hospitality study entitled, "Congregational Ministry with Gay and Lesbian People," under its Division for Outreach. It was provided to congregations with which the division works and as information for the Churchwide Assembly in Denver.

In addition, this past summer, a print and videotape resource, "Talking Together as Christians about Homosexuality," was made available by the ELCA Division for Church in Society through Augsburg Fortress Publishers in Minneapolis. Some 2,000 sets have been distributed.

St. Olaf Choir will tour the United States

(ENS) The St. Olaf Choir, a widely acclaimed ensemble and longtime creative influence behind the *a cappella* choral tradition, will make a millennium tour of 20 cities throughout the United States from January 21 to February 14, 2000. This tour will revisit sites from their groundbreaking 1920 tour of Eastern cultural centers that first catapulted the choir to international status.

Under the direction of Dr. Anton Armstrong, the St. Olaf Choir will present a program of Copland, Billings and Bach along with recent compositions by American composers Kenneth Jennings and Peter Hamlin.

Founded in 1912, the 75 voice St. Olaf Choir is the premier choral ensemble of the Minnesota college, best known for its annual Christmas Festival broadcast. The Choir has sung for numerous presidents and foreign heads of state and appeared by invitation at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Arts Festival in South Korea as the only student choir.

The St. Olaf Choir has recorded 14 CDs, including their most recent releases, *Advance Australia Fair*, and *The Spirituals of William L. Dawson*.

For tour dates and locations email www.stolafrecords.com or call 507/646-3179.

Proselytism challenges Christian-Muslim consultation

(WCC) The search for common principles and definitions highlighted the World Council of Churches (WCC) consultation on "Religious Freedom, Community Rights and Individual Rights: A Christian-Muslim Perspective," held in Hartford, Connecticut, October 14-16, 1999.

Thirty-five international participants gathered to address the issue of religious freedom from a regional perspective as well as in relation to existing universal standards such as international law regarding human rights and the issue of proselytism.

It was reported that both Christians and Muslims expressed appreciation for the WCC's historical distinction between proselytism and witness. Yet, as noted by Dr. Robert Traer of the International Association for Religious Freedom, there is no such distinction in international law. The need to build a common understanding of such concepts as proselytism, mission, tolerance, respect, citizenship, and freedom was identified as a key goal for further dialogue.

The political use and misuse of the issue of religious freedom was also identified through discussion of regional contexts involving the United States, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The Rev. Elga Sarapung noted that only five religions are officially recognized in Indonesia, although other religious traditions are practiced in the country, leading her to ask, "Who says what is a religion?" Religious pluralism, especially as experienced in the African context within families, however, was seen as a source of hope.

"While we discuss this at the political level," said Dr. Anne Kubai, from Kenya, "families continue to live together. We need to close the gap between the community and family levels."

Some of the other issues discussed in the consultation and identified for further work include:

- The relationship of religion and culture
- Education and religious illiteracy
- Religious freedom issues arising from migration
- The need to develop theological resources and language which convey respect for others.

The participants noted that the question of religious freedom is not simply an academic issue. As one participant emphasized, "The starting point for this discussion and the need for common action is very real human suffering."

Australians ponder the appointment of women bishops

(ENI) According to supporters of women's ordination, the Anglican Church in Australia could be five years away from voting to allow the appointment of its first woman bishop.

Australia would become the fourth country in the world to have Anglican women bishops. There are 11 women bishops in the world-wide Anglican Communion – one in Aotearoa/New Zealand and 10 in the United States and Canada. Australia has 70 ordained women, about 50 priests and 20 deacons.

Dr. Muriel Porter, a lay member of the church's standing committee and chair of the national working group examining this issue, said the church hopes to introduce women bishops without any of the controversy of 10 years ago.

"It was terrible, just hideous," she said of the arguments about women priests, which led some in the church take court action to block the ordinations. Porter said that when the church began discussing the issue of women priests, it did not consider that they might one day want to be bishops. She believes all three ministries in the Anglican church – deacon, priest and bishop – should be open to women.

The working group recently released a report canvassing a number of ways to allow women bishops. The group hopes that Anglicans will discuss these options, and that a motion will be put to the next general synod in July 2001. A two-thirds majority vote from clergy and laity would make the motion a provisional canon, or law. A further vote, this time requiring a three-quarters majority, at the General Synod in 2004, would make the motion a full canon of the church.

"By then," Porter said, "there will have been women priests in Australia for 12 years. Some of them, however, although they were ordained as priests in 1992, were ordained deacons in 1986. Normally there is only a one-year gap between being a deacon and being a priest, but that wasn't possible for these women. Some spent six years as deacons, and some were in charge of parishes. So in fact we've got some women who are well and truly experienced."

Porter stressed the need for consensus, saying the big concern for many people was whether women bishops would divide the church. "Our group is very hopeful that we just might find a way through this that is quite unique to the Anglican Communion. We are hoping we might be able to show that by really sitting down together and talking about it ... we might be able to find a middle road of allowing women bishops but still providing some means of caring for those who are opposed."

Israeli Government ruling angers Christians and Muslims

(ENI) The Israeli Government has angered church leaders and Muslims by announcing approval for the construction of a new mosque next to the town where Christians believe Jesus spent his childhood.

According to a report, the new mosque is to face the Basilica of the Annunciation a church built on the site where, according to Christian tradition, the Angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to Jesus. The plan is strongly opposed by some Christian leaders in the Holy Land, who have privately threatened to close churches at Christmas this year and force the cancellation of the Pope's proposed visit during the year 2000.

The ruling follows a dispute over a plot of land, formerly the site of a school near the basilica, being designated by the Nazareth municipality to serve as a plaza for the large numbers of pilgrims expected to arrive in the Holy Land for celebrations to mark the new millennium.

Israel's Public Security Minister, Shlomo Ben-Ami, released details of the new plan after meeting with Christian and Muslim groups from Nazareth. Ben-Ami said the mosque must be limited to 700 square meters. A large barrier would be built between the mosque and the church, a Muslim protest tent currently on the site would be removed next month.

He also said a police station would be established in the location to provide security for tourists and pilgrims attending the mosque or the basilica. "This is the basis of our resolution and we expect the two parties to accept them. If they do not accept them, we will have to take unilateral steps."

In a letter to Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Diodoros; the Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah; the Armenian Patriarch, Torkom Manogian; and the Custos (Roman Catholic Custodian) of the Holy Land, Giovanni Batistelli said, "We believe that the place currently proposed for the building of a mosque—besides being government-owned property—is not compatible with the larger vision of peace and harmony amongst all the faith communities in Nazareth, and will remain an unfortunate source of friction and dispute in the future." The letter continues, "With the upsurge of Christian pilgrimages and tourism only a few short months away, we believe that Israel should act decisively in order to resolve once and for all this dispute so that Nazareth can regain its authentic character as the City of the Annunciation an open and welcoming city for all."

A Muslim leader from Nazareth, Aziz Shehadeh, predicts, "There will be bloodshed. There will be something which people will remember for the coming 50 years. There will be

tension in the city, and there will be tension with Israeli authorities, and this will create tension in the city among all the citizens.”

UMC donates \$1.5 million to ecumenical institute

(ENI) The United Methodist Church, (UMC) one of the largest churches in the United States, has announced an endowment of \$1.5 million to fund a faculty chair in mission at the World Council of Churches (WCC) Bossey Ecumenical Institute near Geneva.

Commenting after the October 26 announcement, the institute’s director, Dr. Heidi Hadsell, a Presbyterian from the United States, said that Bossey’s main goal was the formation of future leaders of churches and the ecumenical movement at the graduate school. She enthusiastically welcomed the endowment and praised the UMC for its “vision” of the future of the church, demonstrated by the gift.

Asked why the UMC, other churches and individuals were prepared to fund the institute at a time when many churches and ecumenical organizations were facing major financial difficulties, Hadsell said, “Bossey is a place of ecumenical and international encounter, and it provides training in leadership for the future generation. Unless you have new leadership coming up, you don’t have an ecumenical movement.”

The UMC endowment, which is one of the largest gifts received by the WCC in its 50-year history, will be managed by the Ecumenical Trust in the United States, which invests funds for various ecumenical organization, including the WCC and the United States National Council of Churches. The trust will pay the income from the endowment to Bossey to fund the new academic chair.

The UMC endowment supports a five-year redevelopment plan for Bossey—academic and financial—launched early this year.

India’s Christian women told to “break culture of silence”

(ENI) With over 2,000 women leaders and workers in attendance at the Ecumenical Women’s Millennium Celebration, held in Secunderabad, India, October 14–17, an appeal was made to all 29 church affiliates of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) to approve the ordination of women.

Susy Matthew, president of All India Council of Christian Women (AICCW), said the aim (of the event) was “to gather and present before the churches the expectations of the women as we enter the third millennium.” She said that the convention had decided to put pressure on the church leadership by setting up “regional ecumenical pressure groups” to pursue the convention’s demands with local church leaders. “We cannot take any drastic steps to implement our demands. “Women alone cannot do much in the church. So we need to create a mass movement in the churches with these pressure groups.”

There were also appeals made for “equal” representation of women in the churches’ decision-making bodies, and putting women theologians “on par” with male theologians. They also called for inclusive liturgy, which ensures that discriminatory and sexist language is removed from church services.

The demands would be sent to heads and leaders of NCCI member churches in the form of a “declaration of women’s aspirations” for follow-up action.

While 200 Catholic women attended as observers, almost 50 speakers, including NCCI officials, church experts and social activists, addressed the convention on themes related to the life of Christian women.

During the convention, Prasanna Kumari, executive secretary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India, urged women to come out of their shells and "to break the culture of silence."

"Women do not speak out in the presence of men," said Kumari. "They [women] only speak to women."

However, Metropolitan Philipose Mar Chrisostam, of the 800,000 member Mar Thoma Church, (one of the few churches with which the Episcopal Church is in full communion now) said that "women's ordination is not a question of justice, but a question of social thinking."

In a telephone interview from the state of Kerala in southern India, Chrisostam said "We do not accept it. In our socio-cultural tradition, women do not play such roles," It was for the same reason, he said, that the central Kerala diocese of the Church of South India (CSI) had not ordained women, though the CSI at national level had formally approved it.

Christian gays and Falwell try to build bridges

(ENI) On October 23, Jerry Falwell, a conservative Baptist clergyman and one of the most outspoken critics of the gay rights movement, met with Mel White, a clergyman and an openly gay Christian activist, to take the first step in a process to build bridges.

The gathering of what some described as "unprecedented" took place at Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, with nearly 400 supporters of Falwell and White condemning violence against both gays and Christians and addressing the recent violence against gays and Christians in Texas and Colorado.

White, who heads a gay rights group promoting non-violent activism in the tradition of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., hailed the meeting as the first step in reconciling two sides that had often exchanged bitter words. "Jerry Falwell is our brother, a child of the same Creator. Jerry is not evil, stupid nor insane. He is a member of our human family who is a victim of the same misinformation that once kept us in our closets. Our job is not to humiliate him but to bring him truth, in love, relentlessly until he, too, is set free."

However, Falwell reportedly told reporters immediately following the meeting that he still believed homosexuality was a sin. Declaring that he and his evangelical supporters could act as a "bridge of friendship," Falwell compared the status of gays and lesbians to alcoholics and unwed mothers.

Perhaps the most serious sign of how far apart the two sides remained was the cancellation, reported by the Associated Press (AP), of plans to share a meal after Falwell's supporters expressed fears that they would be violating what they said was a biblical dictum not to eat with sinners.

Nancy Wilson, vice moderator of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, a predominantly gay and lesbian denomination, said good could come out of the meeting between Falwell and White.

"We must move from debate to dialogue," she said. "We believe this event will create a reduction in religious hate rhetoric."

Daniel Spencer, a professor of religion at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, added that the meeting was perhaps evidence that some on the Christian right realized that the condemnation of gays and lesbians had become a losing issue for them "and that they have a vested self-interest in lowering the rhetoric."

New wineskins for Global Mission 2000

(ENS) At least a thousand Episcopalians are expected to attend the third New Wineskins for Global Mission conference, April 26–30, 2000, in Ridgecrest, North Carolina. Speakers from around the world and Episcopal missionaries from many different agencies are expected to come together to inspire, equip and give practical how-to's to Episcopalians for fulfilling their mission to make disciples of all nations.

The Rt. Rev. Ben Kwashi of Jos, Nigeria will give the keynote address, on God's heart for the world and how the Jos Diocese is growing.

Other participants include Fran Blanchard, who has worked in the Middle East since 1980; the Rt. Rev. Leo Frade, bishop of Honduras; the Rev. James Wong, a church planter from Singapore; the Very Rev. Dr. Peter Moore, Dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, in Pennsylvania; the Rev. Mike Wurschmidt and a team from Shepherd's Heart ministry to the homeless in Pittsburgh; Dr. Paul Marshall, author of *Their Blood Cries Out*; Lisa Chinn, speaking on ministry to internationals; the Rev. Paul Borthwick, author; The Rev. Tad de Bordenave, Director of Anglican Frontier Missions, and the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kamaleson, a former Vice President of World Vision.

The Rt. Rev. Joseph Wasonga will celebrate Communion using a liturgy from Kenya, giving Episcopalians a taste of the rich cultures represented in the church.

Wellspring will be leading worship throughout the conference, using a variety of music including Israeli, African, Pakistani, and Latin rhythms, as well as classic hymns and contemporary songs. The Revs. Walter Hannum and Alison Barfoot will lead Bible studies daily.

Fifty workshops--from helping Sunday school kids be world Christians, to fostering community development and evangelism, to using retirement for mission--will be offered. Forty exhibitors from major Episcopal and interdenominational agencies will be available to talk with participants.

For more information, contact the Episcopal Church Missionary Community, P.O. Box 278, Ambridge, PA, 15003, tel: (724) 266-2810, e-mail: ecmc@usaonet, www.episcopalian.org/ecmc

Episcopal priest to initiate World Sabbath for all religions

(ENI) On January 22, 2000, many different faiths of the world will be demanding an end to violence done in the name of God, calling for greater respect between the world's religions and ethnic groups, and praying for healing of past atrocities, during World Sabbath of Religious Reconciliation.

According to its creator Rod Reinhart, an Episcopal priest and interim pastor of Trinity Church in Farmington Hills, Michigan, The Sabbath, is an inter-faith holy day with two goals:

- create the first holy day to be shared by all religions of the world and,
- teach religious leaders how to publicly oppose hate campaigns and religious wars.

Reinhart agreed that the idea of a millennial peace event is not new. From Rome to Geneva, from Tibet and Bosnia to East Timor and Rwanda, religious groups are cooperating to close what some describe as the bloodiest century in human history and to welcome the new millennium with prayers for peace. Still, he said his proposal is different from others because it creates a holy day that he hopes will eventually be embraced by all ethnic and religious groups on the planet.

“We would do this whether there was a millennium or not. We see the millennium as a good symbol for us because we are trying to begin a whole new thing.”

He said this initiative has been endorsed by the Diocese of Michigan; Temple Israel of Ann Arbor; the Detroit Muslim Center; the United Religions Initiative; the Parliament of the World's Religions and the National Council for Community and Justice (formerly known as the National Conference of Christians and Jews).

Reinhart said his worship service has been designed to acknowledge the world's religious diversity, to pray for those who were victimizing others, to seek forgiveness and reconciliation and to honor those who had died in violent attacks.

“We are also going to be remembering the children in the Baptist Church in Texas who were murdered, the children in the Jewish Center in California and the American school students targeted because of their religious faith. We are saying to the wide world that it is no longer acceptable for Christians or any other religious person to give into the demands of a ruler who calls on them to destroy other people ultimately because the ruler wants land and power.”

For more information visit: <http://members.aol.com/revrodrev/index.html>

Nashotah House creates Boone Porter Institute

(ENS) At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees of Nashotah House, a theological seminary of the Episcopal Church, the use of a \$10,000 gift in memory of Canon Boone Porter was approved as seed money to create the Boone Porter Institute.

The purpose of the institute will be to broaden the seminary's educational offerings for leadership and to train persons, whether lay or ordained, for specific ministries in such areas as parish development, church growth, small group facilitation, mentoring skills, workplace spirituality and servant leadership.

“The donor asked that we use the money in the furtherance of the aims of the ‘Living the Covenant’ conference, which was the last project Dr. Porter worked on,” said Dean Gary W. Kriss, president of Nashotah House. “His very last project, which came to its fulfillment in the week after he died, was a conference focused on local ministry and its corollary, ‘local training.’ Dr. Porter had been a champion of this concept for many years. The seeds that he helped to plant are now bearing fruit all over the church.”

Approximately 450 people attended the “Living the Covenant” conference, held in June 1999 at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Nashotah's Professor of Parish Ministry, the Rev. Dr. Michael Tessman, attended the conference and will be the director of the institute.

“We recognize that the church needs to recover a sense of the mission and ministry of every mature Christian, moving from a primary focus upon ‘membership’ to one of ‘discipleship,’” Tessman said. “Nashotah House is well poised to offer such a new program. Our School of Evangelization already has demonstrated an interest in such training. The addition of courses in spirituality, missiology, and the practice of ministry, will be integrated during the summer term.”

Specific course offerings and tuition will be announced in January 2000 and the Institute will open in June. More information is available at www.nashotah.edu

Author of gay play about Christ receives death threat

(ENI) A London-based Muslim group has issued a death threat to the author of a play depicting Jesus as a homosexual.

Terrence McNally's play, "Corpus Christi," sets the gospel story in modern Texas. It shows Jesus, who is crucified as "King of the Queers," being betrayed by his gay lover, Judas.

The group, Al-Muhajiroun, which describes itself as the Defenders of the Messenger Jesus, said Jesus was an important prophet in Islam and that classical and modern Islamic authorities agreed that capital punishment was the prescribed penalty for insulting a messenger of God.

Since its premiere last year, the play has provoked controversy. When it opened in New York, hundreds of police were deployed to protect the audience from protesters, most of who were Christian.

However, McNally, who resides in New York, is not considered to be under the same risk as Salman Rushdie, the author who received death threats from Iran and went into hiding for several years for fear of attack.

Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad, judge of the UK Shari'ah Court, has warned individuals not to try to carry out the sentence. He said it should only be carried out by an Islamic state.

"Carrying out the penalty has to be left to an Islamic state because in this society [the UK] if individual Muslims acted, it would lead to anarchy," said Sulayman Keeler, Sheikh Omar's spokesman.

Nonetheless, Bishop Richard Holloway, primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and supporter of gay rights, defended the play in a review published in the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement's magazine. Holloway said the Crucifixion "encompasses all pain and persecution, including the persecution of the homosexual community throughout history." The bishop commented: "If Christ is, as the church claims, universal in his significance, then everyone must be able to identify with him."

Holloway acknowledged that "religious communities are always extremely protective of their sacred figures, and they have a right to expect the rest of the community to refrain from insulting them. But that is hardly the issue here.

"The gayness of the Christ figure is almost incidental to the plot of "Corpus Christi," he said. "Any victim of a hate crime could have been transposed into the role."



news features

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Native-American remains find final home in Alaskan village

by Donna Miller MacAlpine

After many months of negotiations between the Anvik Tribal Council and the American Museum of Natural History in New York, some human remains and their associated funerary objects were returned to Anvik, their Alaskan village of origin, last July. Chief Carl Jerue, Jr., and Tribal Council member Ronald Kruger, Sr., travelled to New York to witness the packing of the remains and to accompany them home. The reburial and potlatch took place July 28.

The remains were the skulls of three adult males, three females and a child that had been removed in 1903 during an expansion of the Episcopal Mission, which was established in Anvik in 1887. Their return was prompted by the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which requires all museums in the United States to report to Native American tribes their inventories of all human remains and associated items and to eventually return them to their places of origin.

The remains returned to Anvik also included objects buried with the various persons, including clay lamps, knives, bracelets, wooden boxes, awls and scrapers, a comb and two bear tooth pendants.

While this not the first time that bones had been repatriated in Alaska under the 1990 federal act, it was the first time for an Athabaskan village. The office of the Diocese of Alaska confirmed that it was the first time that the Episcopal Church had been involved.

Preparations for a funeral

The people of Anvik prepared for the reburial as they would have for a funeral. The men built a large coffin with seven compartments, which the women lined with bright cotton prints. Tribal workers dug the grave and built a "fence" to cover the grave.

Many items such as gloves, hatchets, towels and yarn were purchased to distribute at the potlatch, a ceremonial feast at which special foods are served and gifts presented by the family to the guests. A number of women prepared for the potlatch/give-away by making beaded items and other things. Since there was no information about the families of the deceased in this case, the Anvik Tribal Council sponsored the potlatch. In addition, a few days before the reburial a hunting party went out and got a moose under a special permit.

On Tuesday afternoon, the remains of the ancestors were brought to the City Building and placed in the coffin in the presence of the elders. All others were asked to leave the hall

at this time. The Rev. Trimble Gilbert of Arctic Village said prayers in Gwich'in. The coffin remained overnight in the hall. Guests who had already arrived were fed at the building, and later in the evening everyone was welcomed by Jerue, who gave a brief history of what led up to this occasion and a description of the trip to New York. Representatives of other villages also spoke. The Anvik Dancers then danced in front of the coffin to honor the remains.

Wednesday was a very busy day, as many more guests were arriving by plane and boat. Anvik households were occupied with last-minute details and with cooking for the potlatch. With the arrival of Bishop Mark MacDonald of Alaska; Steve Ginnis, Tanana Chiefs president, and others from Anchorage, final preparations were made for the service. Soon after their arrival the artifacts from the graves, which had been displayed at the local museum, were brought to the City Building and placed in a tray inside the top of the coffin.

Request for forgiveness

When this was finished everyone gathered again inside the City Building and the bishop started the service by kneeling before the coffin and declaring repentance for the evil that had been done in the removal of the remains from the graves by a member of the church. This act of penitence and request for forgiveness was then followed by prayers and an explanation of what was to follow.

The coffin was then taken by truck to the front of the church, where the service continued. The coffin was not taken inside; everyone stood around it seemingly unmindful of the mosquitoes and a light rain. It was somewhere in this area that the old graves were originally located.

From there the coffin was carried up the old trail from the church to the cemetery. The grave had been prepared on the point of a ridge a short distance below a cluster of old graves and everyone gathered there for the interment, which included prayers and singing. Crackers, dry fish and pop were distributed, as is customary at a funeral.

The potlatch was held at the City Building and started with the distribution of gifts and of special foods such as vinggiq—Indian ice cream—of several varieties, plus cookies and candy. Some remarks were made by Chief Jerue, who then introduced Laura Chapman Rico, granddaughter of the Rev. John Chapman, Anvik's first priest, who had removed the remains and sent them to New York.

Chapman had a reputation as a scholar with particular interests in linguistics, anthropology and culture. He learned the local language, collected folk tales, and wrote about the Anvik people in articles published in several anthropological journals. He also encouraged explorers and scientists who were traveling along the Yukon River to stop at Anvik to talk about their work with him and his staff.

Although apparently eager to study the seven skulls he sent to the museum, he relocated other remains from their original graves to another part of the cemetery near the mission.

Rico read a statement from herself and her sister, Anna, which requested forgiveness for the wrong that had been done. Anna's son, John Henry Chapman Congdon, also signed the statement.

'A man of his time'

"We... know that it has been painful for the people of Anvik to realize that he [Chapman] removed skeletal remains from ancestral graves nearly 100 years ago. Coming to terms with this knowledge has been painful for us, too," she read.

Noting Chapman's deep interest in science and respect for local language and culture, she said her grandfather "was a man of his time—a time when sensitivity to different cultures

was not as highly developed as it is today. If he were alive today, we are sure he would not have removed the remains. And he would rejoice in their return to the place where they belong....It's a relief to know that an old wrong has been set right."

She added, "We hope that you can find it in your hearts to forgive that wrong, because we know that forgiveness brings healing over time."

When she finished, Hannah Painter Maillelle, an elder now living in Grayling, rose and stated that as a person born in Anvik she forgave Laura's grandfather for what he had done. This was followed by another statement of forgiveness by Marsha Jerue, who has lived in Anvik all her life.

The tables were overflowing with food and guests were invited to eat first, followed by local elders and others. The tables were then cleared away and the Anvik Dancers danced for the audience, including an invitational dance, which gave everyone a chance to take part.

Then Gilbert got out his fiddle, and the bishop got out his guitar, and they played for over an hour. Their musical selection included everything from hymns to a couple of jigs, with some country gospel songs in between. There were even a few dancers on the floor from time to time. After the musicians wearied and put their instruments away, elder Poldine Carlo sang a few upriver mourning songs to conclude the celebration.

--Donna Miller MacAlpine, is a historian and publisher of the Anvik Historical Society newsletter. This article first appeared in *Alaskan Epiphany*, newspaper of the Diocese of Alaska.

99-178

Creche display will highlight Anglican presence during Bethlehem's millennium year

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) There are nearly 80 of them, made of many different materials: rubber, marble or even silver. Every one of them portrays the tender scene—mother, father and child—at Jesus' birth 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, according to Gospel accounts. And all will make up one of the world's largest displays of creches when the Bethlehem Peace Museum opens in early January.

This ambitious project was launched in 1996 by the Anglican Consultative Council, through the Compass Rose Society, as part of the Anglican Communion's contribution toward the renovation of Bethlehem in preparation for a year-long millennium celebration there. Working with planners funded by the Swedish government, the Anglican Communion will furnish the museum, located in Manger Square near the Church of the Nativity, which commemorates Jesus' birthplace. The creches have been collected over the past two years by bishops and their spouses around the world.

"It has been such a satisfying project," said Barbara Payne, wife of Bishop Claude Payne of the Diocese of Texas. As the head collector of creches for the project, she sent letters to the wives of the primates who attended the Lambeth Conference in 1998, seeking as wide a response as possible. She followed that this year with letters to the spouse of every bishop in the Anglican Communion.

The idea was to collect one creche from each country in the Anglican Communion, she said.

From silver to ebony

"We received so many, and they're so different from each other. One woman sent a sterling silver one from the Philippines, the creche from Uganda was made of hand-carved ebony, and a creche sent from England is peopled with characters from *The Canterbury Tales*," she stated.

While all of the contributions have been welcome, Payne said, some were more touching than others. "We received one from every country in the Episcopal Church," she noted. "Even Honduras, with all of its problems in recovering from Hurricane Mitch, shipped a creche along with someone who happened to be traveling to the Diocese of Texas." According to Payne, only three countries in the entire Anglican Communion declined to participate in the project.

The Episcopal Church's contribution to the collection is a 400-pound sculpture of the nativity, carved from a snow-white block of Colorado Yule marble. It is the creation of Joe Gangone, 27-year old, Lakota Sioux and a full-time student at an art institute in Mission, South Dakota. The institute is part of Sinte Gliske University, on the nearby Rosebud Reservation.

"When the spouses planning group met to think about an artist for the creche, the members agreed that they wanted a Native-American artist," said Ann Robertson, wife of Bishop Creighton Robertson of South Dakota. "I talked with the art institute, whose instructors asked students if they would be interested. Four artists said they wanted to participate."

Late last summer, the Robertsons and members of the community in Mission, met at the art institute to look at the finished pieces. "Actually, two were finished, and two others were not," said Mrs. Robertson. With the help of the instructors, she said, the group settled on the marble sculpture.

Held by eagle wings

She said that Gangone began his project with sketches last April and worked steadily through the summer on the stone. The adult figures in the scene wear buffalo robes. They are in a stylized tipi with the child, who is held by eagle wings. Mrs. Robertson explained that Gangone had worked up to 14 hours per day during the hot prairie summer—so hot that a friend built a lean-to on the side of the institute building to provide a slightly cooler space in which to carve.

An anonymous benefactor who has helped to support the institute, and who helped purchase the stone for all four creche projects, has said that he will see that all eventually will be sold, she said.

All the creches were forwarded to Jerusalem for storage. There, Mary Page Jones, wife of Bishop Bob Jones, dean of St. George's College, found space at the school. The creches will soon be transferred to the museum building, which was scheduled to be finished by December 6. A curator has been hired by the ACC to arrange the pieces for display. While the museum will be permanent, no decision has been made on how long the creches will be displayed, said Payne.

About 2 million tourists are expected to visit Bethlehem next year. The town, whose residents number about 30,000, has undergone a \$100-million renovation to accommodate the visitors.

—Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.

99-179

Some Kosovo refugees settle in, others prepare to return home

by Jim DeLa

(ENS) Mehmed Pllana discovered the Serb army was invading his village near Pristina when bullets began tearing through the walls of his home.

Pllana gathered his family as they literally ran for their lives. The family and about 500 other villagers, many of them women and children, headed for the forest as the Serbs pursued them. Pllana, telling his story recently through an interpreter, said he carried his 9-year-old daughter, Ajshe, in his arms, to shield her. "We just kept running and running. Bullets were flying everywhere," he recalled.

He and his family are now safe and living in Clearwater, Florida, thanks to Episcopal Migration Ministry, donations from congregations throughout the diocese and the work of EMM's coordinator in Southwest Florida, Carolyn Monroe.

The Episcopal Ministry to Refugees, the local arm of EMM, has taken in 24 refugees from war-torn Kosovo, and Monroe says most are doing well. They have apartments and most have jobs. Many of the women are working as housekeepers at the Radisson Hotel in nearby St. Petersburg, while many of the men are employed at Eastern Ribbon and Roll, a company that makes cash register tapes for retailers.

The ministry supplies each family with an apartment, furnished by donations from many congregations in the diocese. The pantries are stocked, and closets are filled when they arrive. The program helps them through the first four months by paying rent and teaching them the basics of life in America, such as setting up a bank account and enrolling children in school.

After four months, families are expected to be self-sufficient and most are able to succeed. "We follow them for at least eight months," Monroe says, "and we do have funds in reserve in case some have trouble."

The refugees are adjusting to their new lives, although the experience of fleeing a war zone is still fresh in their minds.

After escaping into the forest, the Pllanas and their neighbors ran four kilometers to a farming village, where they were offered a place to hide. Several people were wounded during the escape, but Pllana said they couldn't trust the doctors. "Their doctors were Serbian doctors," he explained. If someone from Kosovo would go to them, "they would steal that person's blood (to treat Serb soldiers) and then leave them to die."

The Pillanas—by way of horse-drawn carriage and then a cattle train—eventually found themselves at the Macedonian border. They weren't out of danger yet.

Thousands of people were descending on the refugee camp there. Police used clubs to keep crowds in order. "When we were running into the camp, whoever wasn't strong enough would get run over by people trying to get inside. You would have to go past dead bodies to get in. It was a horrible place," Pillana said. They are not planning to return.

Other families now in Clearwater share similar stories. "The Serbs said we had five minutes to pack and leave our house," said Ahmet Statovci. He, his wife and three children left on foot. They were eventually taken to a train station but not told where they were going.

After 12 hours they found themselves at the Macedonian border. But because of the crush of people trying to get into Macedonia, the border was closed. They had nowhere to turn. "We stayed outside in a field for a week."

Once the border reopened, they lived in a tent for five weeks in a refugee camp before they were allowed to select a new country in which to live. They chose the U.S. because one of their sons learned English in school. "We're very glad we are here," he said.

The family was to return to Kosovo by the end of November, although their 18-year-old son, Flamur, will be staying (see separate story). Carolyn Monroe expects that about half of the refugees will eventually return to their homeland. Some, with husbands and other close relatives still in Kosovo, have already returned after just a few months in the U.S.

Although they expect no more refugees from Kosovo, Monroe is still placing families from Bosnia.

To help, contact Episcopal Migration Ministries at (800) 334-7627.

--Jim DeLa is the director of communications for the Diocese of Southwest Florida and editor of the diocesan newsmagazine, *The Southern Cross*.

99-179 Sidebar

His family plans return to Kosovo, but this teen stays to finish school

Flamur Statovci has seen more pain and trauma than most 18-year-olds. The day after NATO began its bombing campaign in Kosovo, armed Serbian soldiers entered his family's home in Pristina and forced them to leave. After five weeks in a refugee camp, they found themselves in America, living in an apartment in Clearwater, Florida.

The family was to return to Kosovo by the end of November. Flamur wants to stay—but his reasons are anything but selfish, according to Carolyn Monroe, coordinator for Episcopal Migration Ministries in Southwest Florida.

"He told me, 'If I go back now, I'll be a nobody,'" she said. Flamur told her he wants to finish high school and attend college in the U.S., so "I can go back and help my people," she said.

Through his own tenacity and the generosity of a couple in the area, Flamur has gotten his wish.

Over the summer, Monroe accompanied him to nearby Pinellas Park High School to discuss enrolling. After completing necessary paperwork, but without his official transcripts,

school officials were not encouraging, Monroe recalled. Even though Flamur is fluent in English and had completed his junior year of high school in Kosovo, school administrators were adamant he repeat the 11th grade.

Undaunted, Flamur later went to Clearwater High School by himself and asked to speak to administrators. By the time he left, he had convinced officials to enroll him as a senior, with the understanding that his parents will send his records to the U.S. after they return to Kosovo. He began classes this fall and is doing well—his first-quarter report card shows As and Bs.

That left the teen with one problem. When his family returns to Kosovo, where would he live? “He told me he wouldn’t need much ... that he’ll get a job while going to school,” Monroe recalled. “He said, ‘All I need is a place to stay, Miss Carolyn,’” she said.

After reading about Flamur in their diocesan newsmagazine, Susan and Bob Guise, who attend St. Anne of Grace Church in Seminole, Florida, decided to help.

Flamur’s room in the Guises’ Reddington Shores home is ready and waiting for him. “It’s been a couple of years since we’ve done the teenage parenting thing,” said Mrs. Guise, but “we’re very excited. It’s going to be a good experience.

“I feel real good about that fact he’s as motivated as he is, and his grades seem to be awfully good for only five months in this county.”

The Guises said their family as well as parishioners at St. Anne’s are looking forward to including Flamur in their lives. “The Christian witness of living side by side may be of some good value, on a one-to-one basis,” she said.—**Jim De La**

99-180

Presiding Bishop’s Christmas 1999 message

We move along, through days and years, trying to be faithful. Yet, for all our prayers, our pondering of scripture and our participation in the sacraments and life of the church, in our hearts there is often a still small voice of accusation which judges us continually, and finds us wanting. Incarnation is an assault upon our own spirit of self-judgment, as God’s unwavering compassion ruthlessly breaks through all of our defenses. Through Jesus, God entered our narrow, limited world and set us free—overriding our self-judgment with mercy and assuring us that his grace is always sufficient and his power is made perfect in weakness.

As we approach a new millennium, let us do so with expectance and humility. May we assume an open and welcoming attitude toward God’s compassion made flesh and dwelling among us in Jesus. As we receive God’s compassion into our hearts they fill and overflow. Compassion thus moves out from God through us: compassion toward one another across all the divisions that plague us as a church and as a nation and subvert all notions of being members one of another for the common good; compassion across cultures and national identities that make us creditors and debtors, rich and poor; compassion for the stranger and the other who is a potential angel of God rather than an enemy; compassion for the earth our home, whose resources we squander and misuse.

A young woman pregnant before her marriage, a rude shed for animals behind an inn and thus God’s word of compassion comes among us in the fragile form of a newborn child entrusted to our faltering human care. So it was two thousand years ago, so it is today. Such is God’s trust in us. Such is God’s hope for us. And, out of his store we are given “grace upon grace.”

You come to us, O Christ,
at the turning of the year and the dawn of a new millennium:
You are the Alpha and the Omega
The beginning and the end. All times
and seasons are yours, and in you
all things hold together and are brought to completion.
Draw us by your Spirit into communion
with you and one another and make us and all things
whole and free in the full force
of your deathless love.
Amen.

Frank T. Griswold
Presiding Bishop and Primate

99-181

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Christmas message to the Anglican Communion

"When they saw the star, they were overjoyed" (Matthew 2:10)

The joy of the Wise Men is understandable. The Gift of Christ to our world is beyond our comprehension. Christmas is always a joyful time for Christians, a time to reflect, with thankfulness to God, upon the full richness of his gift to the world of the Word made Flesh. How profoundly blessed we have been over the past two thousand years by the faith and the hope we have been given in Jesus Christ, that in him the world in all its pain and suffering as well as in its goodness and glory, might be saved.

But this year is special. Across the world, Christians and non-Christians will be united in marking the dawn of a new millennium. There will be global celebrations which acknowledge in a symbolic way the indelible mark which Jesus has made on history, and I hope there will be much rejoicing!

On 31 December, I will be joining many leading figures from Britain, including the Queen, the Prime Minister and a wide range of religious and civic leaders, for a national celebration in the Millennium Dome. I will have the great privilege and joy of leading the nation in prayer and thanksgiving. At that moment, with half the world having already entered the year 2000, and the other half just about to, I shall be very conscious of being at one with you all as we thank God for his goodness and ask him to bless our future together as part of his one creation.

Of course, being at the Millennium Dome, which has deliberately been developed on the Greenwich Meridian, I am sharply reminded that, for several centuries, we have looked at the world in a very euro-centric way. For a long time, maps have been centred around Europe, often exaggerating its size in comparison with other parts. Much of the language which we use to describe the world - the Far East, the Antipodes, the West Indies - assume that everyone sees the globe from a London perspective.

Well, the Anglican Communion demonstrates so well how those perspectives have changed as we enter the new Millennium. We are truly a world-wide Communion, and we

are called to value, respect and care for one another. There continue to be so many places and so many people who are weighed down by the burden of human suffering. We are at one in that suffering as we are at one in the joy of faith. Indeed, it is by growing in that sense of oneness that our pain is transfigured as we each seek to express God's love in our own lives.

It is in that spirit that many people have become very involved in the campaign to lift the burden of unpayable debt from the poorest countries of the world. This campaign, led by the Jubilee 2000 Coalition, has been very successful in drawing attention to the moral dimensions of the problem, and we must ensure that the momentum is maintained, and developed into a challenge to ensure that the UN targets on poverty reduction by 2015 are achieved.

Let me then end this Christmas message by recalling that the 'euro-centricity' of our modern world is a recent phenomenon. Many of the medieval maps which exist - we have a wonderful example in Hereford Cathedral - place Jerusalem at the centre. As we remember with joy God's presence with us, and dedicate ourselves afresh in his service as we begin the new Millennium, let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, spiritual home for millions of people, Christian, Muslim and Jew. May the Prince of Peace reign in our hearts and our lives this Christmas, and may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, invade this world, bringing joy and hope in our believing.

Your brother in Christ,
George Carey

Photographs included in this issue of ENS:

1. The church speaks out for debt relief (99-167)
2. Making a joyful noise, the choir sings at the Black Episcopal Clergy Conference (99-172)
3. Black Clergy Conference participants lay hands on a new bishop (99-172)
4. Episcopal clergy and Anvik Tribal Council bury Native-American remains (99-177)
5. Repatriated Native-American remains find their final resting place in Alaska (99-177)
6. Executive Council members join in blessing new homes in Honduras (99-166)
7. Executive Council joins celebration of new homes in Honduras (99-166)
8. Presiding Bishop's Fund helps build 35 new homes in Honduran village (99-166)
9. Executive Council members join work team building new houses in Honduras (99-166)
10. Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold celebrates Eucharist in Honduran cathedral (99-166)
11. Executive Council participates in exuberant Eucharist during Honduras meeting (99-166)
12. Presiding Bishop meets with South American bishops during visit to Colombia (99-168)
13. South American bishops join presiding to celebrate Eucharist in Columbia (99-168)
14. Lutherans and Catholics sign historic agreement during ceremony in Germany (99-170)
15. New leadership installed at anniversary meeting of the National Council of Churches (99-169)
16. National Council of Churches addresses financial crisis during anniversary meeting (99-169)
17. Executive Council joins groundbreaking for new chapel in Honduras (99-166)
18. Clinic opened in Honduran village devastated by Hurricane Mitch (99-166)
19. Creche sent from India (99-178)
20. Creche sent from Honduras (99-178)
21. Creche sent from Poland (99-178)

(All photos [except 1, 4 and 5] are available in color)

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